



DAMAGE TO ZULU WAR HERO'S GRAVE MAY HAVE BEEN ACCIDENT



The damaged grave of Colour Sgt Anthony Booth, inset

DAMAGE to the grave of a Victoria Cross war hero in Brierley Hill, initially thought to be vandalism, is now believed to have been caused by a lawnmower.

Police revealed they were not treating the damage to Colour Sergeant Anthony Booth's grave in St Michael's Church, Brierley Hill, as a crime.

Questions have now been asked why, if it was caused by a council worker, the incident was not reported. Dudley Council said it had received no reports from its maintenance teams over the damage.

West Midlands Police spokeswoman Lara Horsley said: "Police are not investigating

a damaged grave in St Michael's Church in Brierley Hill any further, as it is believed the damage was caused accidentally by a lawnmower."

The headstone was found knocked over last week and there was widespread outrage over apparent desecration of the grave by vandals. The Victoria Cross Trust launched an appeal to raise money to repair the Zulu War hero's grave, which received more than £3,000 in donations in its first few days.

The trust's chief executive, Gary Stapleton said there was no evidence to confirm how the memorial came to be damaged.

He said that theories were 'being banded

about', adding: "There is no evidence to say it was vandals and there is no way to say it was a lawnmower, or any other theory."

"The very fact it was not reported, that's desecration by vandalism as far as I'm concerned, even though it's not seen as a criminal thing."

A police spokesman confirmed there was no evidence a lawnmower was the cause but officers were working on that assumption that it was not a deliberate act.

A member of Dudley's Royal British Legion had put up a £2,000 reward for information leading to the prosecution of the vandals.

HOSPITAL

Patients flee in A&E false alarm

PATIENTS were evacuated from a unit at Russells Hall Hospital on Monday after a fire alarm sounded.

Fire crews attended the hospital but it turned out to be a false alarm.

The A&E department was evacuated for a short period during the scare.

The site was checked over by firefighters after the alarm went off around 10.50am but the building was given the all clear.

Russells Hall confirmed that A&E was evacuated but said that the patients were quickly allowed back inside after checks were made.

BUILDING

New era begins for church after blaze

A CHURCH which suffered a devastating fire will be opening its newly-refurbished auditorium next month.

The Zion Christian Centre, which has been based in Halesowen for 40 years, changed its name to Lifecentral Church earlier this year. It will include a 400-seater auditorium with new offices and toilets at the site in Little Cornbow.

The official opening of the new facilities will take place on September 15.

AUCTION

Fresh hope for new homes on estate site

A FORMER industrial estate has been put up for auction for up to £500,000, raising fresh hopes for a housing development.

Planning permission has already been secured to flatten the Bridge Trading Centre, High Street, Wordsley, and create nine homes but no developer has yet come forward. SDL Bigwood put the site under the hammer at Villa Park on September 6.

INSIDE

BRUCIE IN THE BLACK COUNTRY



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Bid to recruit in Philippines is unsuccessful 60 NURSES HIRED TO TACKLE CRISIS

RUSSELLS Hall hospital has taken on 60 nurses and midwives in a bid to tackle its ongoing staffing crisis. Health chiefs at the Dudley hospital have hired an extra 38 new nursing graduates, 12 new children's nurses and 10 new midwives over the last few weeks.

It comes after The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust, which runs the hospital, held an 'unsuccessful' recruitment drive in the Philippines. Another attempt to fill roles will take place at the Pensnett Road site today (Thursday).

Siobhan Jordan, interim chief nurse at the trust, said: "Our visit to the Philippines was not successful and we are now focusing our search closer to home with the hopes of attracting some of the fantastic home-grown talent we know are out there."

"Despite a widely-recognised national nurse and midwife shortage across the NHS, we have successfully recruited 38 new nursing graduates, 12 new children's nurses and 10 new midwives in the last few weeks."

Dedicated

"To support our permanent workforce, we also have a team of dedicated health professionals who prefer to work more flexibly on our staff bank."

It was reported in May that staffing levels at the hospital had not been at a level considered safe between October and April, due to recruitment problems, sickness and intense pressure on the accident and emergency department. This sparked a desper-

Report by Luke Bartlett

ate search to fill vacancies, including efforts to hire nurses from overseas.

Ms Jordan added: "We do, of course, welcome applications from nurses of all nationalities and already have a vibrant community of international nurses here in Dudley. We know there are many people who are qualified nurses in their home countries who, due to differences in the registration process, are currently working as support workers or care assistants."

"We are committed to helping these nurses return to practice and have launched a dedicated programme to support them in gaining Nursing and Midwifery Council registration. This is a paid programme and, on completion, they will receive a permanent contract with the trust."

Visit www.facebook.com/DudleyGroupNHS/events or call Philippa Brazier on (01384) 456111 extension 3469

Musical talent is crystal clear



Composer Andy Garbi rehearses on his glass instrument with trumpet player Callum Chin-See, aged 11

A SPECIAL concert using glass instruments is taking place this weekend as part of the International Festival of Glass in Wordsley.

Andy Garbi's Vitrescence: Becoming Glass is being performed at the historic Red House Glass Cone on Saturday at 8.30pm. The award-winning artist and composer has developed a number of glass instruments for the show, alongside the

cone's glass artist Charlotte Hughes-Martin. The concert will take advantage of the unique acoustics of the 100ft high, 18th century glass cone chimney.

Tickets, costing £10 and including a glass of wine, can be booked on (01384) 812750. For more information about the festival visit www.rmlt.org.uk/international-festival-of-glass

● Glass act - see page 4

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Patient leaves hospital after 500 days

AN elderly patient has finally left a hospital after spending more than 500 days in a bed – despite being medically fit to be discharged.

The woman spent a staggering 16 months at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley as her discharge was delayed by a disagreement about her future care.

But the delay caused consternation with one senior councillor in Dudley, who claimed it was a waste of resources.

Diane Wake, chief executive of the Dudley Group NHS Trust, which runs Russells Hall, said the patient, who spent around 510 days on the wards, wanted to be cared for at home but that couldn't be

delivered by the NHS. She has instead been moved to a care home.

Ms Wake said the hospital had worked to try and find a resolution to suit all parties but efforts had 'not been successful' and it was crucial resources 'are used responsibly'.

She said: "A patient who has been medically fit for more than 500 days is being discharged to a nursing home where her ongoing care needs can be met."

"Clinicians from both the nursing home and hospital are confident that her care will be delivered safely in a nursing home environment. Unfortunately, her wish to be cared for at home with

24-hour nursing care cannot be met by the NHS currently.

"We have worked extremely hard with the patient, her family and Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group to find a resolution but this has not been successful."

"It is very important that NHS resources are used responsibly and shared fairly. When a medically fit patient remains in hospital, it means that the bed is not available to treat other patients requiring acute care."

Councillor Ian Kettle, who sits on the council's cabinet, said it was 'alarming' that a patient could take up a bed for so long.

Traveller transit camp is on way for borough

A TRAVELLERS' holding camp will be in place next year in Dudley but hundreds of angry residents would rather see hot spots sealed off.

The transit camp will provide a place for travellers to stay when they arrive in the borough rather than pitching up on unauthorised land.

It is expected the new site – to be ready by May next year – will cut the amount of illegal camps by 70 per cent. There have been 11 unauthorised encampments so far this year costing taxpayers £50,000 in cleaning up costs.

Around 200 residents, who packed out a public meeting last week demanding answers, said they would rather see measures put in place to stop travellers gaining access to sites, such as a moat or bollards.

But this was played down by council chiefs who said fortifying all 3,000 potential sites in Dudley would cost around £1 million.

Dudley Council leader Councillor Patrick Harley, said: "This behaviour recently has been unacceptable. This is why we have taken a tougher stance. The long term solution to rid the borough of this problem is to introduce a transit site."

Secure

Alan Lunt, Dudley's strategic director, said: "We do not have that money to secure all the sites. Security does not work either, it does not prevent incursions."

Questions were also directed at West Midlands Police with the force being accused of not doing enough to tackle travellers.

But this was dismissed by Superintendent Phil Dolby, the force's lead on unauthorised encampments, who said his team often had difficulty arresting travellers for crimes such as criminal damage as it was difficult to narrow it down to the individual.

A location for the proposed transit site has not yet been decided on.

Flats get green light despite concerns



The block of shops in Kingswinford due to be replaced by new flats now planners have given the go-ahead

A £2 million project to demolish an empty row of 'eyesore' shops in Kingswinford and replace them with housing has been approved by Dudley Council planning bosses.

The three-storey building will make way for 16 flats on Beech Road.

Kingswinford South ward councillor Patrick Harley, who is also council leader, has welcomed the plan.

He said: "Some of the shops have been empty for the best part of 25

years. As a resident that has lived around the corner for many years and as a ward councillor, it is about time and I feel this is long overdue.

"I would urge the council to get on with it, we don't want anymore delays."

"New homes are always needed. I very much welcome this."

Parking

Three objections were handed in to Dudley Council's planning committee outlining concerns about

parking, anti-social behaviour and the height of the new development.

The flats will be three-storeys and include 12 two-bedroom flats and four one-bedroom flats. The current site has five empty ground floor shops with vacant rooms on the first and second floor.

One resident who objected to the plans said: "The site is on a junction with Beech Road and Poplar Road and the parking spreads along both roads causing access problems."

17-year-old was kicked in head during party violence

A 17-year-old was left with serious head injuries after a birthday party exploded into violence, a judge heard.

Fighting broke out in the car park of the Spring Meadow Social Club in Cradley Heath. Wolverhampton Crown Court was told that the victim was floored by a single punch from Sennan Ali, 19, and then kicked in the head while lying motionless on the ground by Rashaun Reid, also 19.

The injured youth was unconscious when paramedics reached the scene on February 27 last year, said Miss Lynette McClelland, prosecuting. He was found to be suffering from a fractured skull and a bleed on the brain. At hospital he was put in an induced coma but has since made a good recovery.

Ali admitted causing grievous bodily harm on the first day of his proposed trial and gave evidence against Reid who was convicted of a similar offence. Both were of previous good character.

Ali from Orchard Road, Netherton, was given 16 months detention in a Young Offenders Institution suspended for 18 months and ordered to pay a total of £750 in compensation and costs. Reid of Petford Street, Cradley Heath received two years detention suspended for 18 months with 200 hours unpaid work and £1,250 compensation and costs.

Teenager attacked by masked gang

AN investigation has been launched after a 17-year-old girl was assaulted by a masked gang.

She was walking alone along Mount Road in Wombourne when she was confronted by three people wearing ski masks and dark clothing.

The girl was struck in the ribs and knocked to the ground before the attackers ran off.

The incident happened around 4.15pm on Monday, August 14.

Staffordshire Police is investigating the attack and has asked anyone with information to call 101, quoting incident number 536 of 14/08/17. Or call Crime-stoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Trampoline centre bounces into town

A NEW trampoline centre will be opening in Dudley, creating 33 jobs.

Leap Dudley has been given the green light to convert a former warehouse on Birmingham Road, opposite Tesco, into the trampoline park.

The facility will feature 64 trampolines, plus restaurant, soft play area, sensory room and multi-sports area.

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Voters are urged to check details

RESIDENTS are being urged to ensure they are registered to vote in upcoming elections.

Dudley Council is running its annual voter registration canvass and thousands of letters have hit door-mats across the borough as part of the drive.

People are being asked to check the details are up to date and highlight any residents who are not registered. They can respond by either text, email, website or post.

Sarah Norman, chief executive and electoral registration officer at Dudley Council, said: "It is important that people take the time to check their details and let us know if there are any changes.

"Being registered to vote means that you have a big role to play in shaping hundreds of council services across the borough, but if you're not registered you can't have your say."

For further details see the www.gov.uk/register-to-vote website.

Peppa puts in an appearance at pub

A DUDLEY pub is holding a bank holiday fun day on Monday.

Popular children's cartoon character Peppa Pig will be putting in an appearance at the family event in Upper Gornal, which also includes a bouncy castle and face painting.

The Spills Meadow in Kent Street is hosting the event from noon to 5pm. Tickets costing £6 need to be bought in advance from the pub and include a meet and greet with Peppa Pig.

Boating festival needs more help

ORGANISERS of the annual Black Country Boating Festival are seeking more volunteers.

The 32nd annual festival takes place along the canal at Windmill End, Netherton, on September 9 and 10.

Anyone who can spare an hour or two during the festival weekend should contact Paddy Grice via e-mail to paddy@bcbf.com or call him on 0844 800 5076.

The festival is open to the public from 10am to 5pm each day with free admission and parking.

Toffee factory offers a sweet opportunity

THE former Bluebird Toffee Factory in Halesowen is available for let.

The famous confectionery company left the Hunnington site in 1998 and the former offices and warehouse are currently being advertised by Dudley-based Sellors Surveyors.

Teen driver led police on 34-mile car chase

A TEENAGE driver led police on a 34-mile chase which saw him hit speeds of more than 100mph, a court heard.

Alexander Donaldson, 19, was spotted by officers in his Seat hatchback in Stourbridge and sped off when they switched on their blue light. He raced through five red lights as pursuing officers tracked him for nearly half an hour. Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

A crown court recorder described it as 'one of the worst pieces of dangerous driving' he had dealt with.

Donaldson averaged 68mph for the duration of the pursuit on September 18 along the A461, the A449 towards Kidderminster and then towards Bromsgrove.

Officers had thought Donaldson was in a stolen car but it turned out he was driving his own vehicle, which was taxed and insured.

CCTV of the chase showed him driving at 70mph in 30mph zones. Eventually Donaldson joined the M5, where he touched 110mph. The chasing police vehicle managed to force him off the motorway at Junction 4 (Bromsgrove) where he was intercepted using a Stinger device. He came to a stop soon after.

Donaldson pleaded guilty to dangerous driving at an earlier hearing.

Mr Andrew Baker, defending, said: "It was a terrible piece of driving but no accident ensued. He says he simply panicked."

Donaldson, of Pine Close, King-swinford, was jailed for eight months and also disqualified from driving for two years and four months.

Sentencing him, Recorder Peter Levins said: "This is one of the worst pieces of dangerous driving I've seen"

Teenager struck by car on busy road

A TEENAGE girl suffered head and leg injuries when hit by a car on a busy road in Dudley on Friday morning.

The girl was struck by the vehicle near the junction of Birmingham New Road and Priory Road.

The major road was blocked to traffic after police and paramedics arrived at the scene at around 9.45am. Ambulance spokesman Jamie Arrowsmith said the girl was fully conscious.

Markets planned

A FLEA market and antique sale will be held on Sunday at Halfpenny Green airport, Bobbington, from 8am to 4pm. The next day, a farmers and artisans market is being held.

Woman stabbed to death with swordstick



Murder victim Tina Billingham

FOUL tempered Ronald Cooke is starting at least 24 years behind bars after savagely murdering his partner of 17 years.

The 55-year-old was furious with Tina Billingham because he had been stopped from going to see a camper van offered for sale and blamed her for missing the bargain after she had to collect her elderly uncle from hospital.

Burly Cooke goaded the slightly built 5ft 4ins tall 54-year-old, repeatedly prodding her with a plastic bottle on the trip to the hospital from their

home in Granville Road, Old Hill, on February 6.

Then he stopped their van, reached for the sword stick he kept in the vehicle and stabbed her twice through the heart and liver.

The callous car dealer then drove straight to her GP's surgery at Rowley Healthcare in Hawes Lane, Rowley Regis where he told staff she had stabbed herself. Paramedics took her to hospital where she was certified as dead the same day.

Cooke had a 'fascination' with knives, swords and bayonets as well

as a history of aggressive, destructive behaviour. Miss Billingham was frightened of him and was driven to depression by his bullying.

Judge James Burbidge QC told Cooke: "She was selfless. You were entirely selfish. You took a ferocious weapon and thrust it into her body twice. You had treated her abysmally all day over a trifle. You had been delayed in viewing a camper van."

Miss Billingham's son Jack - she had two children from an earlier marriage - said: "A huge part of our life has been taken from us."

Baby dies after being sent home by doctor

A MOTHER woke up to find her eight-week-old baby dead, just hours after being told to take her home by a doctor at an urgent care centre.

Emma George claims the out-of-hours doctor at the centre at Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley did not carry out a proper physical examination on baby Felicity.

After the baby's temperature was checked, the 24-year-old says she was told 'you look like a sensible mother bring her back tomorrow if she is any worse'. But 12 hours later Mrs George and husband, Lee, 29, woke up at home in Brierley Hill to find Felicity had turned blue and was not breathing. Baby Felicity was rushed by ambulance to hospital but was later pronounced dead from sepsis.

Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group has offered condolences to the family and said it is investigating the incident.

Mrs George said: "Felicity was unwell so I took her to the urgent care centre but the doctor carried out no thorough checks. He told me there was a six-hour wait at A&E. He said: 'You look like a sensible mother, if she gets any worse bring her back tomorrow'. In the morning I woke up and found she had turned blue and was not breathing.

Resuscitate

"We rushed her to A&E. They stopped trying to resuscitate her at 7.50am. It is heartbreaking, we feel completely let down by the doctor and do not know where to turn."

As well as complaining to the CCG, the family is also raising money for an operation to reverse a vasectomy Lee underwent in January - two months before Felicity was born.

They need £3,500 to pay for the operation and have started an online fundraiser, which has so far raised almost £1,500. Mrs George, who grew up in Halesowen, said: "We'll never replace Felicity, but we just want her to be a big sister. We have contacted our GP, but have been told only in exceptional circumstances can it be paid for on the NHS."

The couple have three boys - a seven-year-old from Mr George's previous relationship, a four-year-old from Mrs George's previous relationship along with a two-year-old together.



Emma and Lee George - heartbroken



Baby Felicity died after mother told to take her home



Russells Hall Hospital in Dudley where baby Felicity was seen by a doctor at the urgent care centre

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Mother in plea to Run for Joel

RUNNERS have been urged to sign up for a fun run to raise money for a charity set up by the family of terror attack victims. The Run for Joel event takes place next month at Sandwell Valley Country Park.

It will raise money for Smile for Joel, set up in memory of Joel Richards, his uncle Adrian Evans and grandfather Pat Evans, all killed in the Tunisian beach terror attack in 2015. People have been encouraged to join the run at the country park in West Bromwich by Joel's mother Suzy Evans. It takes place on Sunday, September 10, obtain sponsor forms at smileforjoel.com website.

Coroner's court opens its doors

DUDLEY'S historical coroner's court will be throwing open its doors to the public as part of Heritage Open Day next month.

The event, on September 9, is a celebration of the country's architecture and culture, and venues not usually open to the public allow access to enable visitors to discover the hidden treasures lying within.

The Coroner's Court, located on St James's Road, Dudley is a Grade II* listed building, was designed by Harvey & Wicks, and built between 1924 and 1928, as part of the civic quadrant. For more details on go to www.heritageopendays.org.uk

Childline support over exam worries

CHILDLINE is offering support to young people worried about exam results as teenagers receive AS and A-Level grades.

Over the last three years, the NSPCC-run service has delivered 464 counselling sessions over the phone and online from its Birmingham base to young people from across the UK who are worried about exam results.

Children and young people can contact Childline on 0800 1111 or at www.childline.org.uk website.

Police cadets scheme is set to be launched

A POLICE cadets scheme will be launched in the autumn at schools in Birmingham and Sandwell after the start of the new school year with plans to expand across the region in 2018. Pupils at Washwood Heath Academy, Holte School, Shireland Academy and Holly Lodge Science College will have the first opportunity to sign up as Volunteer WMP Cadets. The last time there was police cadets in the West Midlands was 1997.

Group swoop in to buy Ramada hotel

HOTELIER Redwings Lodge Group has ambitious plans for expansion after taking over The Ramada hotel in Oldbury. The new owners want to extend the hotel, adding a new restaurant and further bedrooms.

The 81-bedroom hotel and conference centre had been owned by Wolverhampton businessman Gurjit Mahal, who bought it out of administration in 2012.

It is now the sixth hotel in the Redwings chain, which includes a lodge on the Wolverhampton ring road.

The hotel, in Wolverhampton Road, was sold by specialist business property adviser Christie & Co, which said the Ramada Birmingham Hotel in Oldbury was put up for sale following a huge turnaround in business performance following its acquisition by Mr Mahal five years ago, said: "The Ramada opened in 2008 and also includes a restaurant and four function rooms, which are extensively used for conferences, events and weddings. We knew it would generate a lot of interest once on the market. Redwings Lodge is very happy to be associated with the Ramada brand and plans to extend the property."

Mr Mahal bought the hotel, which employs around 35 people, a year after former owners, the Brierley Hill-based Fortmere Group, went into administration in 2011.

Artwork at festival really is a glass act

By Heather Large

STUNNING artwork from across the globe has arrived in Stourbridge for the International Festival of Glass, opening tomorrow (Friday).

The team at the Ruskin Glass Centre have been carefully unwrapping more than 60 delicate pieces that make up the entries in it's flagship event, the British Glass Biennale.

Sixty-two contemporary artists based in Britain and working abroad were selected for the competition from around 230 applicants. Their prized creations are ready to take pride of place for the awards ceremony today.

"The Biennale is a really good representation of the best of British glass and is highly regarded around the world," said curator Matt Durran.

All work in the Biennale is available for purchase and the event attracts collectors, galleries and museums from around the world. For the first time, there will also be a Biennale shop allowing visitors to purchase a smaller piece created by artists in the exhibition, ranging from a few pounds up to £2,000. Visitors can view the exhibition until September 9.

Piano

Artist Karlis Bogustovs is bringing a touch of glass to the musical world as he plays his one-of-a-kind glass piano. The Latvian-born skateboarder, who has been making waves in the art world, is even inviting visitors to have a go. His amazing creation was previously displayed at London's Canary Wharf.

From live music to circus performers, there is a feast of other entertainment at the festival which runs from August 25 to 28.

The Red House Glass Cone is dusting off its red carpet in preparation for Andy Garbi's Vitrescence: Becoming Glass. The multi award-winning sound artist, singer and composer and he has worked with the cone's resident glass artist Charlotte Hughes-Martin to develop glass instruments for the piece. Andy, who is originally from Wolverhampton, has also collaborated with Brierley Hill-based engineer Steve Snaith. His audio-visual event will celebrate and explore the nature of glass



Curator Matt Durran unpacks one of the fragile exhibits for the international glass festival



Made from old window panes, the glass piano is unique by using these glass instruments designed to react with the unique acoustics of the 100ft high 18th century glass cone chimney. The performance art is taking place at 8.30pm on Saturday at the Red House Glass Cone and costs £10 per ticket.

Known for their daring feats, Circus Raj will be thrilling the audience at Glasshouse Art College at 7pm on Monday. A film festival, featuring movies old



Juggling knives is just one of the Circus Raj stunts and new from around the world with glass as a theme will take be held at the Ruskin Glass Centre. There will also be jazz at the Rose and Crown from 9pm tomorrow and The Crick Crack Club will be bringing storytelling to the Ruskin Glass Centre at 7.30pm on Sunday. The following day, at the same venue, will be a performance, exploring the unique sounds of glass-making, called Fusion and Fluidity at 2.30pm.

Pathology hub will be run as one service

A MULTI-million pound pathology service will be run between four Black Country NHS Foundation Trusts.

Health chiefs say the new 'hub', which will cost up to £10 million, will help address 'critical challenges'.

It is hoped to bring reduced waiting times for patients for all blood tests, including cancer and specialist diagnosis under a single managed service.

The move was discussed at a meeting of Dudley Group NHS Trust.

Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, Dudley Group NHS Trust, Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust and The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Foundation Trust will plough £400,000 into the scheme.

Just over £92,000 will be stumped up by The Dudley Group by October. It is hoped the service will be up and running next year.

Bosses say the single managed service will run from one of each trust's sites.

Diane Wake, chief executive of Dudley Group, said: "Clearly for every organisation involved this is a large scale change for everyone and we cannot underestimate the impact and anxiety it gives to staff. This is about providing a service that will be strong and sustainable for the future."

"We will be also be recruiting in clinical roles that will drive it forward."

The Black Country Pathology (BCP) Transitional Management Team will be overseeing the changes.

Pathology is the study of disease and looks for abnormalities within samples of blood.

Pervert admits child sex abuse

A 51-year-old man is facing a jail term after admitting sex offences against children. Ian Jones, of Central Drive, Lower Gornal, pleaded guilty to six offences of sex with an under age boy when he appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court last week.

He further admitted causing or inciting two teenagers under 18 to become involved in pornography. Jones pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting a youth and attempting to engage in sexual activity by trying to kiss a 15-year-old. He was placed on the Sex Offenders Register and is on bail for reports until September 15.

Judge Peter Barrie said: "The fact I am granting you bail does not have any bearing on the sentence. It will almost certainly involve a significant custodial sentence."

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Dancing grannies and strong men

THE Fizzogs comedy troupe's Dancing Grannies are among attractions at a three-day festival in the Black Country over the bank holiday weekend. Sandwell Valley Country Park hosts the summer festival, organised by Bescot Promotions from Walsall and LSD Promotions from Stourbridge. The event is from 9am until 5pm on Saturday, Sunday and Monday.

On Sunday and Monday the festival will include Sandwell's Strongest Man Contest. The Dancing Grannies will also be perform at the free admission event. There is also a fun fair, a 'beach' and birds of prey on display. There are parking charges.

Banjo hits right note for retailers

DANCER Ashley Banjo will host a retailer awards ceremony at Merry Hill next month.

The choreographer and creator of smash-hit dance troupe Diversity will host the intu Merry Hill Retailer Awards on September 2. The event and presentations take place at the Copthorne Hotel in Brierley Hill.

Banjo burst on to the dance scene in 2009 and has since been a lead judge on Sky 1's Got To Dance and Ashley Banjo's Secret Street Crew.

In total, more than 15 winners will be announced from over 200 stores.

Swede sounds at tribute concert

FANS of the best known Eurovision winners will take a chance on tribute act Swede Dreamz when they take to the stage in the Black Country with their homage to ABBA on Saturday.

The group promises to take Stourbridge River Rooms on a journey through some of the Swedish super-group's greatest hits, including Dancing Queen, Mamma Mia and Take A Chance On Me.

Tickets for the show will cost £8 and to book call (01384) 397 177 or 07986 577 661.

Strictly duo bring dance to top venue

STRICTLY Come Dancing stars Anton du Beke and Erin Boag's new tour will visit Birmingham in the new year.

Anton & Erin comes to Symphony Hall on January 27 with tickets priced from £22.50 to £50.

The new show will also feature another six world class dancers and the 25-piece London Concert Orchestra, plus Strictly singer Lance Ellington.

For tickets see www.tshs.co.uk or call 0121 780 3333.

Bus drivers confused over red light advice

A POLICY telling bus drivers they should go through traffic lights that are broken or 'stuck on red' is leading to confusion, it has been claimed.

National Express drivers in Dudley have been told they should not sit at lights that are not working but one driver, who did not want to be named, says the order could put safety at risk. He feared he could get into trouble with police.

It comes after a National Express driver was sacked for running a red light. Abdul Jabbar, 59, of Dudley, was sacked by National Express West Midlands in October 2015 after running the light in King Street. He won an unfair dismissal claim as he felt the decision was harsh for one mistake in an otherwise unblemished career.

A notice at the Pensnett depot tells drivers: "If during your duties as a bus driver you are faced with a set of traffic lights which have failed/stuck on red, or there is a sign informing you the lights are out of order, you should treat the situation accordingly and proceed with extreme caution using good all-round observation and be prepared to stop if others assume priority."

National Express spokeswoman Ali Bell said: "We have systems in place with police and councils to check and report faulty traffic lights. Staff with concerns should immediately report them to any manager."

Top chefs attend NEC caravan show

ANTONIO Carluccio OBE heads the celebrity chef line-up at this year's Motorhome and Caravan Show at the NEC.

He will be joining other names from the world of TV cooking and fine dining in the LIVE Theatre, demonstrating their favourite dishes and launching new products at the event, which runs from October 17 to 22.

Other guests include Caribbean cook Rustie Lee from Birmingham, Celebrity MasterChef winner Lisa Faulkner, MasterChef: The Professionals winner Steve Groves and caravan expert Graham Groves.

The Motorhome and Caravan Show is the biggest event of its kind in the UK. Visit the website mcshow.co.uk or call 0844 873 7333.

Pub beer festival

A WOOLLASTON pub holds its 12th annual beer festival over the August bank holiday weekend. The Plough in Bridgnorth Road will feature 10 real ales, a gin tent and live music on Sunday and Monday afternoon.

Breakdown boss used a stolen truck

A 26-year-old running his own breakdown business with a stolen recovery truck has been given a suspended sentence.

The £10,000 Ford Transit, reported stolen on April 29 in 2015, was being driven by the brother of Daniel Millard when stopped by Staffordshire police officers on May 11, 2016, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard. When examined it was found to have 'inconsistencies', said Miss Aimee Parkes, prosecuting. Failed attempts had been made to change the chassis number and police were able to match it with details of the stolen truck.

Millard, of Prestwood, Stourbridge, denied handling stolen property but was found guilty after a trial. He was given a 10-month prison sentence

suspended for 18 months, ordered to do 250 hours' unpaid work and pay £1,250 towards the cost of the case.

Millard claimed to have paid a deposit on the vehicle on March 31, 2015, a month before it had been reported stolen, and to have registered it under a personalised plate at the same time.

Switched

It was suggested that when he collected the truck - after the theft was discovered - the vehicle he saw had been switched for the stolen one which now had the same registration number.

This was later transferred to the plate already registered by the defendant.

He maintained that he knew nothing of the 'ringing'.

Mr Richard Davenport, defending, said Millard, who had no previous convictions, was running his own 'fledgling' car recovery business. He added: "This is a car ringing case where a vehicle was disguised and attempts were made to change the chassis number but the defendant is a man of previous good character."

Judge Peter Barrie told the defendant: "You carried out a considerable amount of work on this vehicle. Attempts were made to disguise that had originally been stolen. In spite of being convicted on the plainest of evidence, you still do not accept your guilt. You were stupid to get involved."

Call for speed limit to be cut after road death

A CORONER has called for speed to be cut on a road where a pensioner was killed.

Frederick Dudley, aged 90, was hit by a Volkswagen Sciroco, which failed to stop after the collision on the A449 Stourbridge Road, near Wombourne.

The widower, from Lower Penn, had got off a bus and was just over half way across the southbound carriageway holding his walking stick and shopping trolley on the 'uncontrolled' crossing when the car, estimated to be travelling up to 85mph on the 60mph route, careered into him. Mr Dudley died at the scene.

The incident happened at around 5.15pm on November 25 last year.

The driver of the VW, 27-year-old Matthew Raybould, of Buffrey Road, Dudley, was arrested at his home the next day and later admitted failing to stop. He was jailed for 18 weeks and banned from driving for 12 months.

PC Roger Wetton told an inquest at Cannock Coroners' Court the driver, who was in the off-side lane, was likely obstructed by cars ahead of him in the nearside and offside lane, and would have had 'insufficient' time to stop even if he had been travelling within the speed limit.

Coroner Margaret Jones said: "It seems sensible to write to the local authority pointing out some of the problems."

Reduced

She later added: "I would suggest to them that at the very least the speed limit is reduced to 40mph and that they may consider an alternative controlled crossing."

Witness motorist Sarah Bishop had reduced her speed when she saw Mr Dudley walking across the road 'quite slowly', and drove past him a moment before the Sciroco hit him. She added: "I heard a loud bang and noticed the vehicle in lane two had hit the pedestrian. I looked in the mirror to see the pedestrian flying in the air like a rag doll."

The coroner concluded: "The deceased was an elderly pedestrian crossing a carriageway at an uncontrolled pedestrian crossing when he was struck by a vehicle which failed to stop."

Cheers! Celebration after pub saved



Campaigners, including (front) Dennis Vinnicombe, celebrate saving The Fiddlers Arms at Lower Gornal

REFUSING a bid to knock down a pub and replace it with a supermarket has been hailed as a victory for people power.

The Fiddlers Arms in Lower Gornal is to stay after the plan to build a Co-op was thrown out.

Regulars gathered to raise a glass after news came through that the application had been re-

fused by Dudley Council. More than 700 people signed a petition opposing plans to bulldoze the pub. Planning experts insisted the pub was a 'heritage asset'.

Dudley MEP and Sedgley councillor Bill Etheridge said: "We need to remember an important part of our local heritage are pubs. We won with the Seven Stars in

Sedgley and hopefully this is proving the point this isn't inevitable.

"With people power and work from local politicians we can stick up for our cultural heritage rather than let everything be dictated by money all the time."

Now campaigners will wait to see if the decision is appealed by owners New River Retail.

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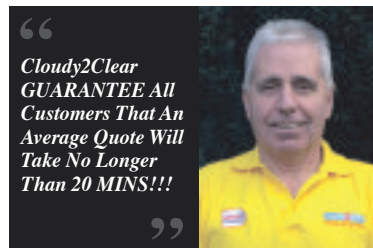
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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Never mind nuclear, we talk about burger size

IT is strange how different countries have different priorities. While Donald Trump squares up to that strange little man in North Korea, and the pair threaten each other with nuclear weapons, our own government has a very different target in its sights. Oversized beefburgers.

Public Health England is drawing up new guidelines to reduce the calories in popular foods such as burgers, crisps and sausage rolls. Manufacturers will either have to change the ingredients, or make the burgers thinner, and the crisp packets smaller. Hmm, I wonder which they will choose?

Personally, I can't see it working. After all, you may have noticed that Wispa bars in multi-packs are smaller than they used to be. I certainly have. Which is why I now eat two every lunchtime.

□ □ □

YOU might remember a few years ago, there was a big furore about how then education secretary Michael Gove was making A-levels tougher to restore their credibility. You know, less coursework, more exams, recalling and analysing facts rather than telling us how they feel. That sort of thing.

Well, Sally Collier, head of the exam regulator Ofqual, thought this was a bit harsh, and lowered the pass mark to compensate.

"I want the message to be that students have done fantastically well. All our kids are brilliant," she said.

But surely, the whole point of the exams is to find out who is brilliant at what, so they can tailor their careers accordingly.

Imagine you are an academically talented teenager, who knew the exams would be tough, and worked day and night get the best results possible. Then you discover that Neil out of The Inbetweeners has got the same grades as you, because the exam regulator says "all kids are brilliant". I think I would feel slightly nudged.

Neil probably won't be too chuffed either when he finds that all his inflated grades entitle him to is the right to spend the next few years racking up thousands of pounds of debt on a qualification worth slightly more than a roll of Andrex.

Wasn't it better for everybody when A-grades were few and far between, when only the top 20 per cent or so went to university, and they didn't have to pay for it? It also meant that instead of entering adulthood with crippling debts, the remaining 80 per cent did useful vocational courses that led to skilled, well-paid jobs.

Highlighting hares' horrors as pair of heroes pass



Cowboy Glen – gone, but not forgotten, including of course, his famous football



Hare today, but gone tomorrow? thanks to vicious country pursuit in east England



Ty died – the death of a famous TV cowboy and film star, with an amazing real name

Goodbye to Glen and Ty, best of the west

PANORAMA (BBC1) revealed this week that the number of arrests for drunkenness on UK flights or at British airports has soared by 50 per cent in a single year. Although I've had the occasional tippie at 30,000 feet, I have never entirely understood why airports have bars, why drunks are allowed to board planes and why airline staff, who have to deal with the consequences, are expected to sell booze. It wouldn't happen on the Number 47 bus so why does it happen on an Airbus?

NOT so long ago, any pointless action was described as "taking coals to Newcastle." I was reminded of it a few days ago sitting in the sunshine at a cafe beside Rutland Water, one of the biggest reservoirs in England and drinking bottled water, imported from Scotland.

If you're strapped for cash and your kids are still tiny and impressionable, you could probably take them to Rutland Water, which extends over 3,000 acres, for a day and convince them it was the seaside. I had a colleague whose child was four before she twigged that the "Alton Towers" her father took her to every weekend was actually a car wash.

WHY have the cops not managed to catch the jogger who infamously knocked a woman pedestrian almost into the path of a bus in London three months ago? Probably because in police terms it wasn't much of an incident: pedestrian knocked over, only slight bruises. It is only when the CCTV footage is publicised that the judgement and emotions of the Great

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



British Public take over from the police assessment and it becomes the crime of the century. The video horrifies ordinary people. The man is a brute, the woman is defenceless and did you see how close she came to that bus? A man wrongly arrested for the incident (he was in America at the time) has received death threats, so God knows what the mob will do when the real offender is nicked.

A SUDDEN rise in hare coursing in eastern England has been blamed on an early harvest leaving the fields clear. Well, that may be part of the explanation. But the real reason for killing hares with greyhounds is that some people who like to think of themselves as countryfolk are actually sadistic mortals.

I CAME across a website this week identifying which of today's second-hand cars will become "a future classic." The snag, as all motorists know from bitter experience, is the ruinous cost of keeping a banger long enough for it to become a collector's item. Future classic = present money-pit.

I WRITE from family experience. In 1971 my father parted with a troublesome Aston Martin for £1,400 and was glad to get that much.

A similar model was auctioned last month for £495,000.

AFTER this week's item on the late Glen Campbell, a reader tells me of a friend who thought the Wichita Lineman was a song about a football match.

A MOGGIE called Ash appeared in a national newspaper as a cheerleader for the latest fad, walking your cat. Ash, wearing a lead, was taken on a three-day hiking trip to Snowdonia and was pictured sitting on a Welsh hillock, allegedly enjoying himself. But he didn't look happy. His eyes and body-language seemed to say: "Please take me home."

CATS are not natural tourists. They love their own little territory. And while some, including our old tabby, enjoy walking with humans, they do it on their own terms and reserve the right to vanish into the hedgerow or dash home. The moment you put a lead on a cat, you try to turn it into something it isn't. And while some good-natured cats will put up with it, others will invoke the cat's ultimate four-footed revenge, and walk out on you.

IT was a bad enough shock to hear that our 1950s cowboy hero Ty Hardin has just died aged 87. But the greater shock was to discover his real name. The man we remember as rootin' tootin' Bronco Layne was Orison Whipple Hungerford Jr.

TALKING POINT



Gearing up for a greener transport

WE live in a world which is being defiled by humankind.

The population explosion over the past decades has seen the Earth set inexorably on course for ecological devastation.

Roads heave with chugging, dirty-fuelled 4x4s and older cars which now go on forever, but which cannot claim to be pollutant-free.

Like drones we line up at the traffic lights, inches away from the car in front as a driver of usually a German car (more often than not!) tries to push in from the right – what kind of existence is this? Surely, there is another way.

The argument for electric cars rattles on, but this is simply rearranging the chairs on the Titanic, as the majority of power stations linked to the National Grid are generated by fossil fuels – so that means it's damaging the atmosphere.

But wait, there may be a Lycra-clad answer to all our problems – those magnificent men and women on their pedalling machines.

Bikes are all about these days, with Britain's ongoing successes in the Olympics and alike. A few years ago a survey was carried out which put the UK in 10th place as the most bike-friendly nation in Europe, with Denmark and Holland sharing top spot. This does not translate itself to the roads however, when at times it can feel more like a war of attrition, sharing lanes with motorised traffic.

I don't seek to defend idiots who think they own the road, two abreast or more. Cyclists should know their position in the pecking order, and it is the ones who think they can jump lights, weave in and out of traffic at speed and not consider pedestrians, who will always give the rest of us who just want to get to work, or ride for the fun of it, a bad name.

On the horizon there are self-charging electric bikes being developed, which will mean we don't all have to be Bradley Wiggins to get around, and even with the technology of electric bikes available now, they are the most environmentally-friendly personal transport available on the roads.

In the meantime however, the message to all road users should be that bikes are here to stay and the police now focus more than ever before on inconsiderate drivers who pose real dangers to cyclists with their thoughtless actions. Nearly 19,000 incidents in 2015 resulted in injury to cyclists on UK roads, with 100 killed.

One last message to anyone on the saddle though – make sure you've got a blooming bell!

GRAEME ANDREW

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Caring for environment is rubbish

JUDGING by the recent actions from Dudley Council it is evident that the environmental policy for the borough has been written on a Post-it note, which is probably on its way to a bin. It won't matter what colour bin, of course, since the rubbish most probably will get bundled together at a land fill site anyway.

On refuse, the plan is shambolic. Remove local recycling skips in conjunction with a proposal to centralise current regional sites at some inaccessible location in Brierley Hill. There has been no consideration to public need or indeed the probable cost associated with the increase of fly-tipping.

Evidently the local re-cycling skips are getting too full too often and the council can't cope. They want to discourage such a practice and reckon that by removing these local sites it will deliver £45,000 of savings. This relative slim cost-saving measure from the same council who co-funded a Ferris wheel in Dudley. You couldn't make it up.

So when your child comes home from school talking about the virtues of looking after the environment, tell them that according to Dudley Council leaders it is all just a load of rubbish.

PHILIP O'DWYER
Hayley Green

Proud of my roots in Staffs

IT appears to me that over the years the Black Country has got bigger and bigger.

When I was growing up in Smethwick in the 1940s and 1950s, I lived in Staffordshire, so did all the people who lived in Walsall, West Bromwich, Wednesbury and Wolverhampton, even those who lived in Brierley Hill.

Oldbury, Dudley, and Stourbridge were in Worcestershire. The Black Country was a small area between Tipton (Staffordshire) and Wolverhampton, at least it was as far as us Smethwickians were concerned.

Now all people who live in the aforementioned towns live in the Black Country. How can that be?

I should also mention that Birmingham was in Warwickshire. I am proud of my roots (Smethwick), but do not consider them to be Black Country.

MR R W MILLS
Kingswinford

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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No surprise some folk go fly-tipping

I contacted Dudley Council to arrange the disposal of two single bed mattresses. I am a 61-year-old man fighting cancer, so moving these myself would be a problem to say the least.

I was told it would cost me £60. That's £30 each. I was amazed. When I lived under Sandwell Council they offered one free collection a year for people aged 60 and over and charged just over

£20 for up to four items. You see so much evidence of fly-tipping, which is deplorable, but if the council charge such high prices it's not surprising. I had to cut my mattresses up and take them to the tip.

I understand the importance of making a charge for services but wonder who thinks these are fair.

MICHAEL SUDDENS
Oldswinford

Boost trade with rent cut

AS a resident in the borough of Dudley, I have been concerned about the working of our local council for years. Now I wonder if they have finally lost it.

As one walks around the town, there are lots of charity shops, cafes, coffee shops, etc. There are also lots of 'job shops', including a new one in King Street. And the brainy boys are now talking about resurrecting some shops in Wolverhampton Street that have been empty for 25 years - as a job centre.

Why don't they drop the rents on properties so that genuine traders can set up businesses? Surely a rent of £100 per week on premises that are being used is better than £500 on empty buildings!

PETER COLE
Kingswinford

Double trouble in name game

CONFUSED by the spreading use of double-barrelled names, which I always associated with the upper classes, I decided to look up the reason on Wikipedia.

It says 'A double surname is taken on marriage in order to preserve a family name which would become extinct due to the absence of male descendants bearing the name connected to the inheritance of a family estate'.

I am still confused as to why there seem to be so many appearing now.

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Firm seals £30m deal for self-driving cars

US snake found on Edge



Dale Preece-Kelly from Critterish Allsorts with the Western Hognose snake

A SNAKE usually found in Arizona and Mexico was discovered on Kinver Edge.

The Western Hognose was spotted on a path at the beauty spot by Dale Preece-Kelly, owner of Kidderminster's Critterish Allsorts. He has named the two-foot long reptile Edge. The snake, which has a bite

as painful as a bee sting, to his collection of 13 snakes at his pet therapy company.

Mr Preece-Kelly said: "I was walking across Kinver Edge when a pair warned me of a snake they had seen nearby. I think it had been wild for a while, given the good condition it was in."

SPORTSCAR company Westfield has sealed a deal worth up to £30 million to export self-driving vehicles to South Korea.

In one of the first commercial orders signed for the export of the vehicles anywhere in the world, Dudley firm Westfield will supply the pods to North Gyeongsang, a South Korean regional government.

The groundbreaking deal comes after International Trade Minister and Kidderminster MP Mark Garnier signed an agreement to pave the way for the project to supply South Korea with 'autonomous electric pods' using UK expertise.

During a visit to South Korea last week to strengthen trade and investment ties, the Minister signed a UK-Korea deal on 'joint automotive collaboration' for the UK to provide the driverless vehicles.

Mr Garnier said: "The Midlands Engine is in full gear as we lead the way in manufacturing expertise and show the world that Britain is open for business."

"Demand for our goods and services is clearly out there and we will continue to support businesses in making the most of global markets as we leave the EU."

Testing

The UK already has a strong automotive trading link with South Korea and the number of cars exported to the country has increased five-fold, making it the UK's eighth largest export market outside of Europe - up from 16th in 2009.

South Korea has ordered five autonomous electric pods for initial testing. The project could provide millions of pounds worth of business for UK companies including Westfield Sports Cars, which is based on the Pensnett Estate in Kingswinford.

Westfield chief executive officer Julian Turner said: "We are really excited to be working with the UK SMART City Team."

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Free hour car park trial to be introduced

Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, August 24, 2017

MOTORISTS will be able to park for free on all council-owned car parks in Dudley borough for an hour, chiefs have announced.

However, drivers had been parking for free for two hours on council car parks in Dudley, Brierley Hill, Halesowen and Sedgley since the launch of a pilot in April.

Now council bosses are looking to make changes to the trial so one hour of free parking is offered on all their car parks from October 1, including those in Stourbridge and Kingswinford. The two-hour trial will end on September 30.

Council bosses will roll out a one-hour trial across the whole borough with the intention of bringing it in permanently.

Councillor Karen Shakespeare, cabinet member for environmental services, said: "We have listened to local people and anecdotally they have told us the towns are busier than ever. This is great news for business and something that we want to build on, so we are now working up the finances to ensure we can make free parking a permanent offer."

"We are now going to adapt the trial to one hour and include all borough car parks so we can analyse this impact before introducing the best option for the borough."

People who want to take advantage of the one-hour trial will need to print and display a free parking ticket from the machines already in place.

Flames spread across farm land

FLAMES shot into the night sky as fire swept across farm land close to Kingswinford. The fire took hold in a harvested corn field off the A449 Kidderminster Road last Wednesday night. Firefighters were quickly able to bring the blaze near to the junction with Lodge Lane under control.



Dudley College students jump for joy after their nervous wait



Principal David Williams with students at Halesowen College



Dudley College Principal Lowell Williams



Students receive their results at Old Swinford Hospital in Stourbridge



Delighted students at Ormiston Forge Academy in Cradley Heath

Class act! Delight at A-levels

Students across Dudley celebrated after getting top grades on A-level results day.

The waiting was finally over for anxious teenagers as they got their hands on their results last Thursday.

Dudley Sixth College students have again excelled with an overall pass rate of 98 per cent showing a consistent picture after last year's result with a high percentage of them achieving higher grades.

Dudley Sixth students began their

celebrations at midnight when their places at University were confirmed under the new UCAS system but then had a sleepless night until they could collect their individual grades at 8am with more than 200 students receiving individual grades at the Dudley site.

A total of 33 of the 37 subjects on offer at Dudley College of Technology achieved a 100 per cent pass rate including Mathematics, Physics, English Language and Literature, Law,

Psychology and Economics.

Dudley College Principal Lowell Williams said: "It always makes me proud when I see Dudley students achieving so much - I see this is the pinnacle of an outstanding year for the college, our learners and the town."

At Ellowes Hall Sports College in Dudley, 40 per cent of entries achieved an A* or A or equivalent with over 75 per cent of entries at grade C or above.

The school also recorded a 97 per cent pass rate which included 13 subjects with a 100 per cent pass rate. Star pupils included Eleanor Taylor with three A*s.

Year 13s at Bishop Milner Catholic College in Dudley achieved a 100 per cent pass rate in 19 subjects. There was a 100 per cent pass rate in 32 subjects at Halesowen College.

At Windsor Sixth Form in Halesowen, 45 per cent of all grades were at A* to B. Fifteen students achieved

the equivalent of at least three A* or A grades.

All students at Old Swinford Hospital in Stourbridge passed their exams across 24 subjects.

Ormiston Forge Academy in Cradley Heath capped off the academic year with 84 per cent of the cohort achieving three or more passes at A*-E as 55 per cent earned three or more A-level passes at A* to C and 28 per cent achieved A* to B grades.

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Sedgley Councillor Michael Evans in Gospel End Street

Safety work expected to get under way at 'danger spot'

WORK to improve safety along a road dubbed a 'renowned danger spot' will begin later this year.

Plans are in the pipeline to reconstruct Gospel End Street in Sedgley to highlight give-way signs and markings.

Numerous crashes have taken place along the road in recent years. In February last year two boys and a man were taken to Russells Hall hospital following a two-car crash at Gospel End Street.

By Jamie Brassington

Sedgley councillor Michael Evans has campaigned to get road safety measures in place and has previously called the road a 'renowned danger spot'.

He expects work to begin in December. He said: "I have been assured that restructuring the road will be carried out in this financial year. I think it will be welcome news as it is a dangerous junction."

The idea of restructuring the road will be to make it safer for motorists to travel along and reduce the risk of accidents. Planners also believe it will help drivers to pick out road signs.

The project faced delays because Dudley Council had to go to the private sector for the designs to be drawn up. Councillor Evans added: "The plans will also have to go through two safety committees, which is the normal process."

Fundraising night of comedy and music

A FUNDRAISING evening of music, comedy and magic is to take place in Dudley this autumn.

The event has been organised in aid of Better Understanding of Dementia for Sandwell (BUDS).

The Duchess and the Dukes band will provide musical entertainment and there will be comedy from David St John and magic from award-winning magician Ron Popple. The evening will also include a hot/cold buffet, complimentary glass of wine and a raffle with quality prizes.

The event take place on Thursday, October 5, from 7 to 10pm at The Village Hotel, in Castlegate Drive.

Cost per ticket is £35. For a table of 10 booked together the price will be £32 per ticket.

To book, call 0121 565 3721 or email info@buds.co.uk and tickets must be paid for upon booking.

Council bid to claw back £15 million in savings

Report by Clare Butler

AROUND £15 million a year will be saved by council chiefs in Dudley as they improve the way they buy goods and services from the private sector, it has been announced.

Millions of pounds are spent each year on building materials, maintenance contracts, construction sub-contractors and social care packages by the authority.

It is hoped the initiative will help to make around £4m in savings that have been targeted from the council's general fund and millions more from the separate housing and school budgets.



Patrick Harley

Bosses say work on transforming procurement processes – the buying of services from outside the council – will also help achieve five per cent savings.

Leader Patrick Harley said it would be an 'exciting move' for the borough.

He said: "The council spends millions of pound each year on building materials, maintenance contracts, construction sub-contractors, social care packages and much more."

"By getting our house in order and improving our staffing structure and processes on procurement we can generate significant savings to ensure we have a sustainable budget moving forward. This is a very exciting move to ensure Dudley borough residents are getting value for money from their council when we are buying in goods and services from the private sector."

Agreement

It comes as an agreement was made at a Full Council meeting in March.

The original proposal was for an external commercial company to be appointed to drive out savings but now the changes will be made in-house instead.

An Invest to Save Budget of £200,000 will allow external interim support to be brought in – with an interim head of procurement taken on for a short period.

Councillor Steve Clark, cabinet member for finance, added: "The first thing we must do is ensure our own processes are in place so we will take on a procurement expert who will have experience in the commercial and local government sectors."

"This immediate action will ensure we have systems fit for purpose so that best value is guaranteed when we are taking on new contracts or renewing contracts."

The council's UKIP group leader Councillor Paul Brothwood said he welcomed the move, after his group had campaigned for tighter procurement savings.

Just the business as charity cash pledged

DUDLEY'S Mayor has been buoyed by online donations of £1,500 to his nominated charities.

Councillor Dave Tyler visited Castle & Crystal Credit Union as part of his 100 business pledge.

He said: "I was delighted to be greeted with the news that my charity online fundraising facility, supported by Castle & Crystal has already reached the £1,500 mark."

The visit to the credit union was part of the mayor's commitment to celebrate the achievements of local businesses and to promote the support that is available from the council to all businesses, whether large or small, starting up or expanding.

Any business wishing to be included in the 100 business pledge, can get in touch through mayorofdudley.org.uk

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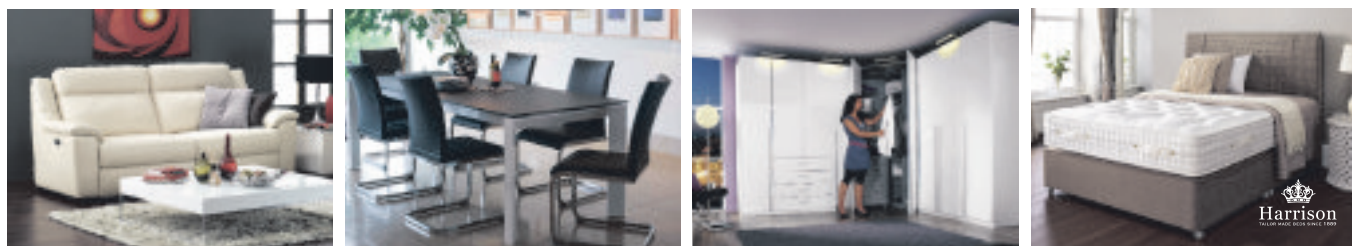
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Youngster dices with death at crossing



Video of the dangerous prank in which the youngster had to dive under a barrier to avoid a train

THIS is the terrifying moment a youngster sprinted across a level crossing near Hagley as its barriers come down, in a prank described as 'shocking' by transport bosses.

Network Rail released the video from Blakedown level crossing, at the village between Stourbridge and Kidderminster.

It shows the youth running across as the barriers come down, rolling under the final barrier to get out of the way of an oncoming train. The shocking video has been released just days after a new safety campaign was launched to warn about the dangers.

Over the past 10 years almost 170 young people have lost their lives after trespassing on the railway. Nearly half of them were under the age of 25. Allan Spence, head of public and passenger safety for Network Rail, said: "We must make young people aware that if they go on the railway they are dangerous grounds."

More out of work in the West Midlands

EMPLOYMENT has reached an all-time high in the UK but the number of jobless people in the West Midlands has risen.

The Office for National Statistics said the number of people in work nationally rose by 125,000 to 32.07 million in the three months to June, with the employment rate climbing by 0.3 per cent to a record 75.1 per cent.

But the West Midlands saw the number of unemployed rise by 3,000 to 164,000 - 5.8 per cent of the working population. The number of people in work in the region was 2.67m, a rate of 72.3 per cent.

The jobs market remained a bright spot for the economy, with the unemployment rate dropping by 0.2 per cent.

Meanwhile, the so-called claimant count fell nationally by 4,200 in July to 807,800.

The number claiming in the West Midlands was down 970 to 85,505 - 2.4 per cent.

The biggest drop of 160 was in Sandwell to 7,055 - 3.5 per cent.

There were 105 fewer

By John Corser

claimants in Walsall at 4,890 - 2.9 per cent, Dudley was down 70 at 5,735 - three per cent, and Wolverhampton dropped by 65 to 6,705 - 4.2 per cent. South Staffordshire reduced by five to 785 - 1.2 per cent.

Annual growth in wages was 2.1 per cent for April to June, up from a revised figure of 1.9 per cent for March to May. Once bonuses are stripped out, pay expanded by 2.1 per cent over the period, rising from two per cent.

But once inflation is taken into account, total pay in real terms sank by 0.5 per cent both including and excluding bonuses. It comes as the cost of living held steady at 2.6 per cent in July.

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28th September 2017 – 10.30 am to 2.30 pm**

There will be a range of activities during the day including a reminiscence session, craft session, relaxation session and seated exercise – join us for all or part of the day.

Information from various organisations will be available on marketplace stalls. Refreshments and a buffet lunch will be provided but booking is essential.

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Retail park will offer more places for eating

A NEW coffee shop and a restaurant will be coming to a major Black Country shopping centre in the latest stage of its regeneration.

A Starbucks branch will open on the upper level of Merry Hill, transforming part of a car park, while a restaurant will be another new addition.

It follows an announcement from Merry Hill owners

Intu that £100 million of improvements will be made at the shopping centre over the next few years, including a new cinema and a string of restaurants.

Developers say the two A3-units will 'complement' the existing retail offer at Merry Hill Retail Park.

Challenge

They will be situated towards the top of the embankment near to The Boulevard and the rear of the existing car parking spaces. Pedestrian access will be via the existing car park.

An outdoor seating area is to be created along with 12 car parking spaces for Starbucks and 11 spaces for the restaurant.

Plans were approved by

By Clare Butler

the council on August 11.

Planning documents state: "The main challenge associated with these proposals was to site each building successfully with respect to the retail park as a whole, bearing in mind their proximity to the adjacent grassed banks and minimising the loss of car parking and impact on existing planting."

"Overall these proposals represent a high quality development."

Owner Intu recently bought the building that houses the existing Odeon cinema at Merry Hill and is now in talks with the chain to move it into a new building that would be constructed at the rear of the centre.

Sir Lenny helps clear the way for students



Sir Lenny Henry lends a hand on the clearing hotline to help find students university places

SIR Lenny Henry stepped in to help operate the clearing hotline and offer university places directly to students who face making quick changes to their education plans.

The Birmingham City University Chancellor was operating the phones at its city centre campus on A-level results day last week. Those calling into the hotline were greeted with the recognisable voice of Dudley-born Sir Lenny, who was on hand to advise students on course spaces, availability, entry requirements and even offer places. Thousands of calls were expected to be dealt with by the team.

Sir Lenny said: "Starting higher education had a transformative impact on me and for many students clearing will be the first steps they take on that journey. Securing a place at university was a proud moment and eventually led me to become chancellor here, that is why I'll take so much pleasure from being able to offer others the same opportunity."

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Robert Plant has two concerts on home turf in the West Midlands to mark the release of new album Carry

ROCK legend Robert Plant will be in concert at venues in Wolverhampton and Birmingham in November and December.

The West Bromwich-born former Led Zeppelin star, now 68, will play the Wolverhampton Civic Hall and the Birmingham Symphony Hall alongside his band The Sensational Space Shifters.

The tour will come hot on the heels of the rocker's new album Carry Fire, which is being released on October 13.

He will be supported at the shows by folk music star Seth Lakeman, who also features on the new album.

Tickets for the Wolverhampton show on November 20 and the Birmingham show on December 12 both go on sale tomorrow (Friday). For further information go to the website wolvescivic.co.uk or call the box office on 0870 3207000 and for Symphony Hall see thsh.co.uk or call the box office on 0121 780 3333.

Have say on future of pitches and parks

PEOPLE have been urged to let council chiefs know which green spaces that are important to them as Black Country authorities plan for the region's future.

Residents in Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton have until September 8 to have their say on how the Black Country Core Strategy should be updated.

They are being asked to think about which green and environmental spaces matter most, this could be anything from cycle paths to sport pitches or parks, open spaces or areas for wildlife.

Chiefs said the feedback will be used to update the strategy - a planning document which will map out development across the four authorities from now until 2036. This includes where homes should be built and where jobs should be provided.

Dudley Council leader Patrick Harley said: "With only a few weeks to go until the consultation comes to an end, I would urge everyone to take a few minutes out of their day to have their say on the big issues."

"The document will not

By David Cosgrove

only shape how we continue to protect and improve the local environment but will also set out plans on how people will get around and how we manage increasing demands for growth in housing and the economy."

The strategy outlines how many homes need to be built and how to plan for the number of extra jobs needed for a growing population. It also decides where new homes and businesses should be located. The document also says there is a need to find the equivalent of more than 300 rugby pitches of new land for industries and businesses.

Take part at blackcoun trycorestrategy.dudley.gov.uk or call (01354) 814136.

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16 Brother fights extradition in kidnap case

Stourbridge Chronicle Thursday, August 24, 2017

THE brother of the chief suspect in the alleged kidnapping of British model Chloe Ayling is to fight extradition to Italy.

Ms Ayling, aged 20, is believed to have been snatched by a group calling itself Black Death after being lured to a fake modelling shoot in Milan last month.

Chief suspect Lukasz Herba has said he did not knowingly take part in any crime. Last Wednesday the National Crime Agency (NCA) said his brother, Michal Herba, had been arrested. The 36-year-old was detained by officers from West Midlands Police and East Midlands Special Operations Unit at an address in Tividale.

Michal Herba was apprehended on a European Arrest Warrant issued by the Italian authorities and London's Westminster Magistrates' Court last week heard that he would contest extradition.

London-based Ms Ayling was allegedly drugged and bundled into the boot of a car after being tricked into attending the bogus photoshoot in Milan on July 11.

It is alleged that Poland-born Lukasz Herba, 30, of Tividale, planned the abduction. Italian police claim he is part of the Black Death group active on the dark web.

Get it on with top T Rex tribute band

T Rextasy, the top tribute act to 1970s pop star Marc Bolan, will be bringing glam and glitter to Bilston's Robin 2 venue on Saturday night.

Fronted by Danielz, T Rextasy have been endorsed by the Bolan family and this gig will be particularly poignant as it comes just a couple of weeks before the 40th anniversary of Bolan's death in a car crash, aged 29.

Tickets cost £13 in advance or £15 on the door. T Rextasy will be on stage from 9pm. See the venue's website at therobin.co.uk or call 01902 401211.



At Dudley Hippodrome, Bruce Forsyth, Roy Castle, Ben Warriss and Ken Dodd



Bruce on stage with Julie Andrews, left, and Beryl Reid



Sir Bruce Forsyth in recent years



Dudley's famous Hippodrome theatre, where the showbiz star performed



Where career began – Theatre Royal Bilston, since demolished

It began for Brucie in Bilston

HE was the face of Saturday night TV for decades but Sir Bruce Forsyth's career began right here in the Black Country as a starry-eyed teenager.

Bruce's first-ever public appearance was in Bilston in 1942, where at just 14 he sang, danced and played the accordion. Later he appeared at

the landmark Dudley Hippodrome theatre.

He appeared under the stage name The Mighty Atom at the Bilston's Theatre Royal, with billboards splashed across Wolverhampton and Birmingham with 'Boy Brucie, The Mighty Atom'. The Great Marzot topped the bill at the 1,300-seat venue, which sat on the corner of Mount Pleasant.

But the show wasn't a success and ground to a halt after just one week. Speaking in recent years, Bruce joked: "After one week the show folded because I was so terrible. All I got was 13 shillings and fourpence."

Sue Appleby recalled how her mother, who is now 102, was at one of the Bilston shows. She said: "My mum was born in Bilston as Ivy Rolason. She was there at the Bilston

Theatre Royal in what was probably his first ever performance. Billed as Boy Bruce the Mighty Atom, he did a song and dance act and played the accordion.

"My mum always told me how she saw him on stage there and what a wonderful night it was."

The theatre itself lasted until 1957 when it closed and was eventually demolished in 1961.

In later years, Sir Bruce, who died on Friday aged 89, graced the Black Country again, appearing at Dudley Hippodrome.

In 2015, when former box office assistant Amy Shepherd passed away, her son Paul shared some of her photographs and memorabilia from her time at the iconic theatre, including a picture of Bruce with Roy Castle, Ben Warriss and Ken Dodd.

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Simple steps homeowners can take now to protect their assets.

Head of April King Legal Paul King explains why some homeowners are doing **too little, too late** to protect their hard-earned assets.

Care Cost Fees

"A lot of people are still unaware that if they need care in later life, their assets will be means-tested by the Local Authority to help pay for these services."

"The Local Authority will look to use the assets of a person until they get down to a lower limit of £14,250, when the Local Authority will take over the fees."

"For instance, my own grandmother sadly passed away recently at the age of 92. My grandfather had died many years earlier and left everything to her."

"When she needed care in the last six years of her life, because my grandfather had left everything to her, the house and all the estate was counted in the Local Authority's means test."

"Our clients tell us, 'We've worked hard all our lives, why should the Local Authority get it all?'"

"Just as she died, she had gone down to that lower limit of £14,250 and that's all her children inherited."

"There are many myths about the steps people can take to protect their assets from being used like this."

"The main one is that a parent should simply sign their house over to the children now, so it won't be taken into consideration for means testing. That's just not true."

"Local Authorities will actually look to see if you've 'deliberately deprived' yourself of an asset by giving property away, going back over any period in time."

"Sometimes people think that if the gift is made seven years prior then the house is safe. This is not so as the seven-year rule only applies to Inheritance Tax and not Local Authority care."

"The solution is for couples to simply not leave everything to each other in the first place."

"What my grandfather could have done is leave his half of the house in trust to his children, stating that they couldn't have it while his wife, my grandmother, was still alive. We call these Property Trust Wills."

"If my grandfather had left his half of the house in trust to the children then when my grandmother subsequently received care in her later life she would only have been means tested on her own half of the house, but my grandfather's half would have been safe."

"Why should he have to contribute his half when he didn't receive any care?"

"The important factor is that couples need to act in advance. Once one party dies or loses mental capacity, through a stroke for example, then they are no longer in a position to do this legitimate and straightforward type of planning."

"It is therefore important for couples to act now even if they may not foresee care fees being an issue."

Paul goes on to explain that most clients he sees are surprised to learn remarriage usually cancels a Will and makes the spouse next in line to inherit, ahead of their own children! Protecting your half of the house in this way, he suggests, ensures that your children ultimately inherit when the survivor dies.

"Had my grandmother remarried after the death of my grandfather the whole estate could have passed sideways out of the family," says Paul.

Lasting Power of Attorney

Paul explains how people often get confused thinking that, because they have made a Will, their executors can also deal with assets if there is illness, stroke or some other form of incapacity while they are still alive.

"Everyone should actually have two documents – a Will that deals with their estate on death, and a Lasting Power of Attorney that deals with their estate during their lifetime," he says.

"There are two types of Lasting Power of Attorney – one deals with finance, the other deals with health and welfare."

"In many ways it's similar to a passport; a document that's registered now and one which can be physically handed to the attorneys should the need arise."

"It allows the attorneys, perhaps the children, to deal with the banks and pension companies etc should their parent become incapacitated, but also to deal with matters such as where the parent should be living and how they should receive care."

"Your attorneys, again perhaps your children, must legally act in your best interests at all times."

"You can choose a number of attorneys to act, either jointly or independently, and April King advises on the various options available."

"Couples are often surprised to discover that even joint bank accounts can be frozen until the bank sees sight of a Lasting Power of Attorney document."

"Having a Lasting Power of Attorney removes the burden on children should ill health happen further down the line."

"It helps a family deal with bank accounts and so on during a parent's lifetime and ceases on death."

"Crucially, you have to complete a Lasting Power of Attorney while you are still in good mental health."

"If someone becomes ill through say, a stroke or dementia, this option is lost and the family would have to apply for a Deputyship Order from the Court of Protection – a drawn out and expensive process."

"It is therefore a good idea for clients to plan ahead and remove any future burden from the family."

"Once again, all adults should be thinking of this, particularly when there are children or a business involved."

"It's not just something to think about when you get older, that's the challenge for us."

"People think, 'I'm not ill, why do I need to make a Power of Attorney?' But they're missing the point. This is a document that has to be done in advance."



Paul King, Head of April King Legal

"The Lasting Power of Attorney remains in place until you die unless you want to cancel it."

"Once it's registered, you don't have to worry if you then develop some debilitating illness. A burden has been removed from the family at an already difficult time."

Bloodline Trust Wills

The majority of April King's clients have already made standard 'Mirror Wills' with other firms before approaching the Firm. A Mirror Will is when a couple leave everything to each other on the first death, then to the children when the second partner dies. But modern family life means these type of Wills leave a lot to chance.

Explains Paul: "If I have a Mirror Will leaving everything to my wife and she remarries or goes into care after my death then either the new husband or the Local Authority are likely to inherit most, if not all, of my estate ahead of my children."

"Even if my children are named in my Mirror Will, it is by no means certain that they will inherit anything."

"Once again, this is because a remarriage would cancel the Will my wife had previously made with me and make the new husband next-of-kin."

"This often comes as a big shock to my clients who had perhaps thought that all was in order and that the family bloodline would one day inherit."

"The same is true for thinking that their children and/or grandchildren will one day benefit under a Mirror Will."

"If any of your children should die leaving everything to their husband or wife and that son-in-law or daughter-in-law should then remarry, then your grandchildren would be the ones to lose out under the line of inheritance."

"Worse still, someone else's grandchildren would be in line to receive the benefit of all your years of hard work."

"I've experienced this in my own family and I'm sure most people have had similar experiences or heard of someone who has."

"Bloodline Trust Wills give greater protection to your children."

"These type of Wills not only give your children complete control and access to the inheritance they receive from you, they also grant added protection from the twists and turns of modern family life."

"The wording in these Wills states that any money left over on their demise must pass to any children born of them – your grandchildren."

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Meeting to focus on museums

THE Black Country Living Museum is hosting a major museums conference this week.

Staff from open-air museums across Europe will descend on the venue for the conference.

Visitors will also be delivering sessions around the theme with this year's keynote speaker – archaeologist and a museum director Dr Patrick Greene OBE – starting the conference with his thoughts on what lies ahead for open-air museums.

BCLM director and chief executive Andrew Lovett was due to provide introductory remarks which will be streamed on YouTube.

The venue is holding the 28th Association of European Open-Air Museums Conference until tomorrow (Friday).

Help needed with garden

VOLUNTEERS are needed to help a project to create a garden for the Afro-Caribbean Elders Group in Dudley. It will involve building a greenhouse and planting vegetables, fruit trees and herbs.

There will also be a memorial space for lost loved ones as part of the project. o get involved call Anita Chumber at Dudley and Walsall Mental Health Trust on 07917 559351.

FOCUS ON DUDLEY TOWN CENTRE

Investment drive as group aiming to boost business

BUSINESS and investment in Dudley has been given a huge boost with the unveiling of a new group aimed at driving regeneration across the borough.

Dudley Council leader Councillor Patrick Harley is spearheading the initiative which is aimed at encouraging growth.

The group will act as ambassadors for the borough and identify opportunities, as well as constraints for businesses and feed them back to the council and partners.

They will also work with the council to promote the borough to key investors, developers and visitors.

Councillor Harley said: "One of my key priorities as leader of the council is to ensure that we do everything within our powers and resources to facilitate economic growth.

Positives

To achieve this we need to work more closely with partners and stakeholders across the borough, the wider Black Country and the emerging West Midlands Combined Authority.

"There is a lot to be positive about in Dudley. But we also need to identify and deal with any areas which are unhelpful for businesses

By Clare Butler

which want to invest. The voice of business is critical to my aim. We must listen to our existing businesses and with partners do what we can to ensure that the conditions and support are in place to encourage business growth and attract new investment."

The council has also been working with West Midlands Mayor Andy Street to submit a business case for the Midland Metro extension from Brierley Hill. The new DY5 enterprise zone has officially opened for business. There are also plans for a rail innovation centre at Castle Hill, alongside college developments in the town and improvements at tourist sites including Dudley Zoo and Black Country Living Museum.



Robin Woja, Paul Gough and Warren Davies, Station Commander at Bilston and Tettenhall

Boxers to fight fire with fire

THEY are more used to fighting fires but brigade members will be fighting in the boxing ring instead – all in the name of charity.

Firefighters from West Midlands Fire Service have teamed up with a boxing gym ahead of a 12-hour spar-athon.

Many punches will be thrown at the Priory Park Boxing Club in Dudley during the mammoth session, from 7am to 7pm on Saturday.

Amateur boxers, coaches and the public will be getting involved on the day raising money for the gym's own charity for young boxers. The fire service uses the gym for training and crew members were keen to get involved.

Club chairman Paul Gough said: "Anyone can turn up and put the gloves on."

Music and mirth at two shows

PEOPLE can enjoy Black Country music and mirth during two upcoming events.

Performers Billy Spake Mon and Bren Hawthorne are behind The Boonyeds World Tour.

The first event, in support of charity Action Heart Dudley, takes place on Saturday at the Cosy Cafe, in the Churchill Precinct, in Dudley town centre, between 10.30am and 3pm.

Guests will be arriving all day to play a wide range of music hosted by the duo.

The second event, called Two Blokes Two Chairs an' a Bloke Named John, is being held on September 30 at the Pump House, in Engine Street, Langley. Admission is £5. Email b.dakin@aston.ac.uk or text 07514 824845 with name and number of tickets and collect on the night.

Lion day was main draw

VISITORS to Dudley Zoo helped to raise more than £660 on World Lion Day.

The attraction devoted a day towards raising awareness of the threats Asiatic lions face, with less than 300 surviving in the wild.

Keepers manned an information stand throughout the day.

A raffle for a 12-month adoption of one of the zoo's three lions was won by 11 year-old Madison Warren, from West Bromwich.

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Students' healthy way to help in community

SANDWELL College has been shortlisted for two national awards as it further cements its key role within the community.

A striking mural created by students is in the running for a 2017 Community Rail Award.

The arts students' 'Smethwick Going Forward 'Love Thy Neighbour' mural at Rolfe Street Station is in the Community Art Schemes – Permanent Projects award category, while the station regeneration project, also worked on by college construction students, has been shortlisted for the Involving Diverse Groups award.

The college has links with London Midland, Network Rail and Transport for West Midlands.

Holistic

Meanwhile, continuing the work within the community, beauty therapy and healthcare students have been working with the Kissing It Better charity at Sandwell and City Hospitals.

They have provided holistic treatments and manicures to assist patients in their recovery from strokes and other serious illnesses. As part of the Sapphire Project, organised by ACRC and Age Concern, healthcare students have visited patients on wards and participated in voluntary placements to enrich their studies.

Carole Richardson of Kissing It Better said: "They all did amazingly well."

In addition beauty students have provided complimentary treatments at a community event held at Santander in West Bromwich High Street.

The bank branch invited the college to get involved alongside Barnardos on Track, Hope for Justice – highlighting



Students involved with the Kissing It Better charity at Sandwell and City Hospitals



A community event held at Santander based in West Bromwich High Street

modern day slavery, and TNCMC – raising awareness of the contribution of the Caribbean armed forces to the Commonwealth over the past century.

And Sandwell College recently held a community fun day to welcome local people to its Central Campus.

The summer fair was packed with a host of activities, including street theatre and music performances, a camper

van selfie booth and fairground rides for all the family. Principal Graham Pennington said: "This is our opportunity to give something back to the community and encourage people to further their career aspirations with information on course applications."

Enrolment for all courses starts on GCSE results day, August 24, and continues through to September.

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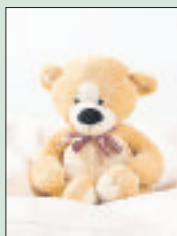
Bedtime can spark tears, mood swings and tantrums

LIGHT evenings and school holidays can make bedtime a challenge, but for 40 per cent of parents, the mere mention of the words "time for bed" results in mood swings, tantrums and tears according to a new survey from online parenting resource Families Online (www.familiesonline.co.uk).

Some parents said their children also get angry at bedtime and some admitted their child gets scared at the prospect of going to bed which can present further challenges in getting children to sleep.

HOURS SPENT GETTING CHILDREN TO SLEEP...

Almost 1,800 parents across the UK (with children up to the age of eight years) were polled on their child's bedtime routine. The results also showed that parents are spending a considerable amount of time each night on bedtime routines with a quarter of parents admitting that they spend over an hour every evening getting their child into bed and a further 52 per cent (more than half) spend 30 to 45 minutes.



WHAT TIME IS BEDTIME?

When it comes to deciding what time is 'bedtime' most parents (57 per cent) will aim to have their children in bed between 7pm and 7.30pm each evening (meaning for many, that the bedtime process has to start around an hour earlier than this). For 25 per cent of parents, 8pm to 8.30pm is deemed to be bedtime and is more likely to be reflective of parents with older children in the category. Only one per cent of parents said their child has no set bedtime suggesting that UK parents are sticklers for a regular bedtime routine.

PARENTS ADMIT TO GIVING SWEETS AND BISCUITS AT BEDTIME...

Parents were also quizzed on their rules around eating at bedtime with a firm 60 per cent saying they do not allow their child to have any kind of snack at bedtime. Almost a quarter of parents (24 per cent) say they will allow a healthy snack at bedtime (such as a piece of fruit). Interestingly, even though most parents are aware that too much sugar can have an impact on a child's ability to sleep, 16 per cent of parents still say they will offer their child biscuits and sweet treats at bedtime too, in a bid to get them to settle.

STAYING UP ON A SCHOOL NIGHT?

On the topic of staying up later than 10pm on a school night, a resounding 74 per cent of parents say they would not allow this. Just under a quarter of parents (23 per cent) said they would allow it but only on a special occasion. A final three per cent said they regularly allow their child to stay up beyond 10pm on a school night.



Bedtime routines were also found to involve a whole host of elements from singing songs to brushing teeth and leaving lights on. According to parents, bedtime routines were reported to involve:

- A warm drink
- Brushing teeth
- Music / singing
- Musical/interactive toys
- Stories / Reading
- Hot water bottles
- Leaving lights on
- Snacks
- Soft toys to cuddle
- Bath / wash

Faye Mingo, mum of two and director of marketing at Families, said: "As back to school looms, parents will look to regain some kind of order and routine with bedtimes and it can be tricky to manage, especially if you have children of varying ages."

"It can be challenging to rationalise to younger children that older siblings can stay up later. As parents we are aware of the importance of sleep and this poll suggests that parents are keen to instill a regular routine despite it often being a stressful time of the day. Children get overtired, especially after a day at nursery or school and emotions can run high, so bedtime often goes hand in hand with tears and frustration."



Grace Smith, from Bridgnorth, when she signed for Aston Villa



England's Lucy Bronze, left, and the Netherlands' Danielle van de Donk battling for the ball

Why football should not be just 'a man's game'

By Lauren Taylor

IN case it's passed you by this summer, women's football is a big deal right now.

The UEFA Women's Euro 2017 saw record numbers tuning in to watch the matches on Channel 4.

England may have lost to Holland (who went on to win, so we're fine with that), but it drew the biggest-ever UK audience for a women's football match – and the Lionesses had an impressive run in the tournament. They smashed Scotland 6-0 in their opening game and Jodie Taylor scored the first hat trick by an English footballer since Gary Lineker in 1986. The quarter-final saw their first victory over France in 43 years.

"To see such powerful, athletic and talented women performing on an international stage is nothing short of inspirational," says Lisa Pearce, CEO of London FA, the first woman to hold the position.

It's an exciting time for women's football – and not just professionally. In the face of dated stereotypes that sadly still hang around, the likes of captain Steph Houghton, Jodie Taylor and Lucy Bronze campaign tirelessly to grow the profile of women's football and drive participation at grassroots level.

Locally, Aston Villa and England u17 star Grace Smith has gone back to her old school in Bridgnorth to help inspire the next generation of footballers.

Former Oldbury Wells pupil Grace Smith took time out from training to chat about her memories of school and her life since leaving.

After answering questions, Grace gave the year seven girls an hour-long masterclass, including some of the drills she had picked up as part of her England training.

But if you were never encouraged to play football as a child, donning a full strip and jumping on a full-sized football pitch for 90 minutes of football might seem like a pretty alien concept.

What football can do for your fitness

Running for 90 minutes, or even less in a five aside match, is always going to be good for anyone's fitness, but the twists, turns, sprints, kicks and stop-start nature of the game have additional benefits.

"In a game of football, a distance of roughly 13km is covered, with around 15% of that distance covered at high speeds," says Jonathan Hawkins, fitness advisor at Discount Supplements. For the average female, roughly 780 calories are burned in an average 90-minute match."

A 2010 study by Copenhagen university, involving 50 researchers in seven countries, found football 'provides a broad spectrum of health and fitness effects that are at least as pronounced as for running, and in some cases even better'.



Grace Smith shows off her football skills at her old school, Oldbury Wells in Bridgnorth



A England fan shows her support in the stands during a Women's Euro 2017 match

But how many women actually play?

Nearly three million women play some form of football in England. There are nearly 6,000 women and girls' football clubs at the moment and the FA are aiming to double that by 2020, and this year there's a big push to make that happen through recreational football opportunities and at club level.

Lisa says: "Women's football is the fast-

est growing sport in the UK in terms of participation for a reason and there's no easier sport that you can pick up and play. Whatever age or ability you are, all you need is a football and a free bit of grass area, even in the privacy of your back garden, and you can get going on the basics of the game."

And the Lionesses are a big part of making it happen, says Kelly Simmons MBE, the FA's participation and development

director. "They're really aware of how important their role in promoting the sport is. They all want this generation of girls to play and we know we have to break down barriers."

"The players want to promote the sport in the right way."

Why we need to encourage young girls to get involved

It's not uncommon to hear women say they never got the chance to play football at school and that girls were sent to do gymnastics or play netball instead. Kelly says that now 96% of primary school boys play football, compared to 41% of girls.

"It is a bit of a postcode lottery," she says. "We have got girls' football teams in primary and secondary schools, but it's not universal."

Kelly adds: "There are parents who still think football is for boys and we know there are girls who think, 'I really like football, but it's for boys'."

But things are changing. There are programmes to help provide teaching resources in schools, and the FA are working with Premier League clubs to ensure there are pathways for girls to play club football. They recently launched a programme called Wildcats for 5 to 11-year-olds. "There's been a lot of research into the barriers to girls playing football and what they want, which is fun, friends and fitness," says Kelly. "But if we don't get them by 8 or 9, then they think, 'It's a boys sport' or 'I don't want to make a fool of myself'. It's about giving every girl the opportunity to play whatever sport they fall in love with."

Be part of changing perceptions

You only have to look at Twitter during the broadcasting of a women's football match to see that some men don't think women should be playing football at all.

"It's absolute nonsense," Kelly says with a laugh, "and you can't win some people over, but I think it's changing. You don't get many comments from people who have seen it and are critical, it's normally people that have a preconception. That's not just a problem for women's football though, there's women's rugby and cricket too."

"There's also a lot of positive comments about the women's team - from men and women - and people who haven't seen the sport before who are impressed with the standard and the physicality of it."

What does the future hold?

Kelly thinks we should look at the US where 'soccer' is very much a male and female sport, and always has been.

"They're number one in the world with mass participation numbers, and there isn't the same gender divide around it."

To find a women's football club near you, visit the www.thefa.com/womens-girls-football/get-involved.



Ian Steel gets the 1951 Tour of Britain Trophy from Vic Davies, MD of Viking Cycles



Bob Thom with his Viking Team in front of their Morris van



Ian Steel in the 1952 Tour of Britain with Viking's Stan Blair and Bob Thom



Ian Steel powering ahead racing for the Viking team

Wheels of Steel helped put city on cycling map

BEFORE Chris Froome and Bradley Wiggins, before even Wolverhampton's own Hugh Porter, British road racing had a Wolverhampton based cycling hero, Ian Steel, winner of the Peace Race in 1952, an event even more arduous than the Tour de France.

Ian rode for Wolverhampton's famous Viking Team, managed by Bob Thom, himself a British Road Race Champion.

In the period just after the War when Wolverhampton's Percy Stallard was leading a revolt against the National Cyclists Union (NCU), the governing body which was totally against road racing, and tried to sabotage all such events, Percy formed the British League of Racing Cyclists.

MEMORY LANE

By Alec Brew

Bob Thom was recruited to manage the local Viking team, and Ian Steel soon became its star.

He won the 1951 Daily Express Tour of Britain, in which the NCU had tried and failed to block foreign teams from competing.

Gruelling

In 1952 the BLRC entered a team, managed by Percy Stallard, in the Peace Race, 1,265 miles in 12 stages through Poland Germany and Czechoslovakia, the most gruelling amateur international stage race on the planet, usually dominated by Eastern Bloc riders.

Managed superbly by Stallard, the British team shepherded Ian Steel

to victory by two minutes 35 seconds from Jan Vesely, the Czech double World champion.

The Union Cycliste Internationale were so impressed they awarded the BLRC associate membership, and ordered the horrified NCU to co-operate, and put British cycling road racing in order. Ian Steel's career was cut short when he was riding in the Tour de France in 1955 for the British team.

His chances were ruined by the orders given him by the team manager, who also managed a rival team to Viking, and tried to favour one of his own.

Ian was so upset he quite the Tour the next day, and gave up race cycling altogether.

The Viking Team raced on, and Bob Thom, and his son, also named Bob, were coaches and managers of British road and cyclo-cross teams for many years to come.



Bob Thom on the cover of the Viking brochure

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Vintage items for modern kitchens

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips



CONTINUING our 'vintage home' theme this week I thought we would head into the kitchen and see what could be added in terms of old-fashioned style.

Let's start with furniture – and there is a wide range to choose from including Welsh dressers, kitchen tables and old wooden cupboards.

Many people are moving away from the standard 'fitted' kitchen and opting instead for a free-standing approach which allows you to combine old and new items for a truly individual look.

Nothing is nicer in a modern kitchen, providing you have the room, than a vintage farmhouse-style table complete with chairs (the latter don't have to be identical, it's nice to mix and match).

Welsh dressers are not just attractive, they provide some very useful storage space and can prove a real focal point if their racks are filled with colourful plates and pieces of vintage china.

Wooden cupboards can be painted to fit in with a colour scheme and for extra seating why not go for an old church pew?

If it doesn't fit you can get a carpenter to reduce its size.

Wall-mounted plate racks are extremely useful, as are butchers blocks, and old milk churns make great stools if you add some padded seating!



Fill shelves and other available spaces with old bain-maries, cow creamers and china jugs and use vintage storage pots for wooden spoons and other utensils (see, there IS a use for the pot that has lost its lid!).

Glass bottles look lovely displayed on a kitchen window-ledge.

Potted herbs can also look attractive placed in vintage dishes.

For the kitchen walls, look out for old metal advertising signs and vintage clocks.

And additionally see if you can find an old picnic hamper in which to store tea-towels.

Happy vintage shopping!

- Perry and Phillips hold valuation days, for sale items only, every Wednesday from 10am until 4pm. The next Perry and Phillips sale of antiques and collectibles takes place at the Mill Street saleroom in Low Town, Bridgnorth, on Tuesday, October 3. Viewing will be during the weekend and on Monday and also from 10am on auction day.
- New sale bidders are advised to attend the saleroom early on auction day to register and be allocated a bidding number.
- Perry and Phillips hold sales on the first Tuesday of every other month.

Popularity of coffee showing no signs of waning



So much choice with coffee

MY son took me for a coffee on Saturday morning.

We went to a new coffee shop in Stafford, no bigger than my lounge at home, packed with tables and chairs.

The walls were covered with great 1950s themed black and white photos and the music was smooth. The only additional items on offer were a selection of alcoholic spirits and a sumptuous display of gelato. It was relaxed and comfortable and the coffee was fantastic.

I ordered a caramel latte but was advised that their normal latte was infused through with deep chocolate and caramel flavours and it did not disappoint.

These delightful establishments are meeting places where every age group socialise and relax.

As a young person, 30 years ago, we drank mostly tea, an occasional filtered coffee after a meal, served with milk in a jug and sugar cubes in a dish but the choice was simply black or white.

How popular has coffee become? Cappuccino (steamed foamed velvety milk poured over one shot of coffee, finished with foam

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis



and a sprinkle of chocolate powder), latte (freshly steamed milk without foam served in a tall glass with a shot of espresso coffee) and macchiato (a touch of steamed foamed milk added to a double shot of coffee), Americana (espresso diluted with hot water and without milk).

Artform

There's also espresso (one shot of espresso in a small cup), mocha (chocolate powder mixed with an espresso shot and then steamed milk and micro-foam added), frappe (cold espresso placed in a long glass with ice, and milk) and Bonbon (espresso layered over sweetened condensed milk) to name only a few of the many choices on offer.

The barista has made the production into an artform, creating designs on the surface and serving with an elegant flourish and

small biscuit or truffle.

Starbucks and Costa now have drive-thrus to quench our thirst for these fashionable beverages. Not quite fast serve as each drink is made to order – but at least we do not need to stretch our legs and walk inside to order our drinks.

Petrol stations offer a limited choice from machines in the shops, for a few coins we can enjoy a reasonably tasty cappuccino to take on our way, no longer a need for the thermos flask.

Most of us own a coffee machine with pods or capsules of varying types, a vast choice of flavours to suit our mood and taste and for ease there is now a wide choice of instant versions.

Café culture has changed, go and visit your local establishments, there are plenty to choose from, and sample a coffee type you have never tried before.

You might just be surprised!

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Long-term exposure to the stress hormone can lead to chronic pain



Don't overdo it when practising yoga at home

Are your everyday habits putting posture at risk?



Using a smartphone to send emails can cause postural problems

LONG hours at a desk, slouching over laptops, lugging half our worldly belongings around in a handbag slung over one shoulder (the same one) time after time...

Most of us are aware that we're doing a lot of things daily that aren't very good for our posture – and this can lead to things like back pain, tense, aching shoulders and sore necks.

Around 28 million people in the UK suffer with chronic pain, and back pain accounts for a large chunk of this.

"Good posture is important on many levels," adds osteopath and biomechanics expert Claire McKenna. "Not only is it important to reduce the effects of load on the muscular skeletal system, it also influences the respiratory system, the cardiovascular system and the neurological system – essentially, all areas of the body. Poor posture can lead to digestive issues and problems in the pelvis and the gut, as well as respiratory issues following on from changes to the diaphragm, and headaches and upper back and neck pain due to muscle tightness."

But what about the less obvious things that might be damaging our posture on a regular basis? Here are 9 common – but less obvious – posture pitfalls to be aware of:

By Abi Jackson

1. Using a smartphone to send emails

"We typically forward-bend our neck when using a smartphone, rather than holding it up in front of us. This repeated forward bending can cause postural problems. The first sign will typically be an aching in the necks," says Tim Allardye, clinical director at Surrey Physio.

2. Loading the dishwasher

"Try to squat every time you load and unload the dishwasher. It's great for toning the legs and butt, and will save extra pressure through your back."

3. Wearing ill-fitting bras

Bras need to fit properly so your shoulders don't take all the strain.

4. Stress

"Don't forget how stress can affect your posture. In stressful situations, the added level of stress means the way you hold yourself is very different," says Claire. "Stress increases your acceptance to pain – initially, in the short-term, the effect of adrenaline on the nervous system means you probably don't feel pain developing. But the long-term effects of the stress hormone can lead to chronic pain."

5. Picking up toddlers and babies

"Back pain is very common when preg-

nant and following the birth of the baby, while it can be made worse if you're not using the right technique to pick up your child and when breastfeeding," says leading osteopath, acupuncturist and masseur, Garry Trainer.

6. Wearing flat pumps and sandals

"People tend to wear flat pumps in the summer, which aren't great for your arches. That collapse [in the arch] then goes on to affect the ankles, knees and hips and pelvis," says Claire.

7. Overdoing it in your yoga class

"While the benefits of yoga can be exceptional, you do need to be careful with some movements, especially repeated forward bending if you have a weak back, so moves like the Downward Dog, or 'standing forward bend' are to be done with caution," says Tim.

8. Gardening

"Gardening does tend to get people in bad postural positions for long periods," says Tim. "While we encourage exercise and getting outdoors, try not to put your body under too much strain."

9. Carrying heavy rucksacks

"Be aware of the influence of the rucksack on the spine; we tend to hunch forward due to the weight of the bag. Don't have a bag that is too heavy," says Claire..

A WHOLE LOTTA LOVE FOR DEBORAH

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THEATRE + PUZZLES + TV GUIDE + MORE

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We look forward to seeing you soon!

Deborah's Led a life less ordinary

She hails from one of the greatest rock families of them all. Rock'n'blues singer Deborah Bonham grew up as her big brother, John, was becoming the greatest drummer in music history. The Led Zeppelin powerhouse was fast, powerful and had his own distinctive groove. Though he died at the tragically young age of 32, he left a legacy that lasts to this day.

Deborah was eight or nine when Led Zeppelin started to take off. And she imagined that his 'job' – of touring the world, recording number one hit records and having fans fall at your feet – was perfectly normal. As you would, at the age of nine.

"Where John's talent came from, nobody can say. I think it's something you are born with. From the age of two or three, he was bashing pots and pans. When it took off for them, I was so young. I grew up with it. I grew up in the thick of it. I just thought that was a normal way of life. I thought you made an album and it went straight to number one.

"Believe me, I later learnt that was not always the case. But I was very young when he joined Led Zeppelin. I was only six or seven. I had a false understanding of the music industry to be fair. But I always knew I wanted to sing."

Not that John – or, indeed, Deborah's mother and father – wanted her to follow in her illustrious brother's footsteps. "It wasn't something my brother or mum and dad wanted me to happen. Especially after seeing what the industry was like, with John. He was right too. It wasn't any place that he wanted his kid sister to be.

"So I did a bit of opera singing to start with. But I just loved blues/rock. And I love performing live. I was always going to do it. You can't deny what's in your heart."

Her parents encouraged her to succeed at school instead of pursuing her improbable dreams of being a rock singer. She took their advice, to a point. "One great thing I did was learn to speak French at school. I sort of stuck with it and now, for me, one of the best places to tour is France. I often think of my brother and mum and dad telling me to stop at school and learn and I think of how I mastered French because, of course, it paid off. Except I use the language to help me sing the blues."

Deborah, who hails from Redditch, is back on her old stomping ground soon with a headline gig coming up at Wolverhampton's Slade Rooms on September 22. It's her second in the region in recent times. Back in May she headlined Birmingham's Symphony Hall with Paul Rodgers, the former Free vocalist who also sang with Queen. The Paul Rodgers gigs were a blast and Deborah is looking forward to being back in the West Midlands.

"I'm really excited about it. I can't remember the last time I played Wolverhampton, it was many years ago. I love it up there. Any chance I get to come and play up there is great. We did Symphony Hall with Paul Rodgers and that was one of the most amazing gigs."

She used to spend most of her life in the Black Country, hanging out with bands and watching gigs.

"We always used to come over. I saw Slade. I remember seeing them at the Wulfrun Hall and they were bloody brilliant. They were a real rocking band."

She also played a gig when

Singing the blues – Deborah Bonham returns to the Slade Rooms



'Uncle' Robert Plant turned up to do a duet – much to the surprise of fans. That was at Huntingdon Hall, in Worcester, not far from Robert's Kidderminster home.

"Singing with Robert Plant, given our family's history with Led Zeppelin, was a massive moment. Robert's been like a brother or uncle to me. That was at Huntingdon Hall. He turned up and got up to sing with me, unbeknownst to the audience.

That was a high moment. When things like that happen, it's an honour isn't it.

"But there's been a lot of amazing moments in my life. Every day I think how lucky I've been. I was a big fan of one of the all time greatest female vocalists, Ann Peebles, who had a hit with I Can't Stand The Rain. We ended up doing something together, a few shows, and we recorded a version of Can't Stand The Rain.

"I've been extremely blessed because I've had the joy of playing with the most incredible people. To get up on stage with Humble Pie, when they reformed with Peter Frampton, was incredible and I guess the Paul Rodgers thing was another recent highlight."

Deborah has other memories of Wolverhampton – and not all of them musical. Like so many Midlands rock stars, she's a fan of Wolverhampton Wanderers and has enjoyed seeing them play.

"It's the home

Singing with Robert Plant, given our family's history, was a massive moment

ground of Wolverhampton Wanderers and I've got to say I'm a fan. I went to the Wolves on one occasion to see them play Liverpool. We thrashed them. We stopped off at those Bathams pubs on the way for a drink. Everybody thought we'd get thrashed but I think we must have put five passed them that day."

She's grateful for the way her life turned out and says she owes much of her success to growing up with John and the rest of her family in a musical household.

"I guess my mom and dad were very musical. My mom always sang a little, not seriously but, but she loved good music. They were fans of the big bands like Count Basie. That was pretty much John's focus too. My dad loved all the black soul divas like Lena Horne and Mahalia Jackson. He would play a lot of that music. I grew up listening to that. Both my brothers, John and Michael, got into the Motown stuff, as well as the rock. It was a real eclectic house. I was listening to Jimi Hendrix and Joplin and all of that, CSN and Fleetwood Mac, but I was also steeped in the British movement and The Kinks. Then Zeppelin took off and everything changed."

● Tickets are available from the venue.

● For more entertainment news and reviews see The Ticket in your Express & Star every Friday.

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Parquet Courts – album and tour



Holding Courts on matters of the heart

New York art rockers Parquet Courts follow their latest album *Human Performance* with a UK visit including a gig at Birmingham's O2 Institute next Thursday, August 31.

The band, who have a sound akin to Beck, Talking Heads and Franz Ferdinand, have released fifth album *Human Performance*, their second via Rough Trade.

Whereas other Parquet Courts albums were recorded in days or weeks, for *Human Performance* the band took an entire year and it's the first LP that finds all four band members contributing songs.

The album brings sonic experimentation and melodic introspection to matters of the heart, matters of humanity, of identity. "I told you I loved you, did I even deserve it when you returned it?" singer/guitarist

Andrew Savage wonders on the title track. It's also their most pop-oriented collection yet, coming only months after the release of the largely instrumental *Monastic Living* EP, that was made at the same time.

Across six years, four full-length albums, and two EPs, Parquet Courts have littered their lyrics with question marks. If previous album 2014's *Content Nausea* – with Savage and Austin Brown recording as Parkay Quarts – looked at anxiety in the age of big data, then on *Human Performance* the question marks get turned on themselves.

"There is a lot of darkness, and general anguish being worked out on this record," Brown adds. "But it ends kind of peacefully, kind of accepting that you can't do much about it."

Cole gets a kick out of comedy venture



Comedy fans will be able to get their kicks at Walsall Football Club in a forthcoming feast of laughter.

The Just For Kicks show, to be staged at the Banks's Stadium on October 27, is the mastermind of Wednesday-born comic Jonny Cole, pictured. It will feature TV comics Joe Lycett, from Birmingham, and Phoenix Nights' Archie Kelly alongside Dudley's Wayne Beese.

Cole is the driving force and he hopes to make it a regular feature. The former diesel salesman has

emerged as an unstoppable musical-comedy force since his re-workings of well-known tunes have proved popular with audiences all over Britain. He was a headline act on the UK tour of A Black Country Night Out and has been a regular on local radio shows. He has even had a local beer named Fat Face in his honour by Stourbridge-based Sadler's Brewery.

Cole said: "I'm really excited about this venture and hopefully it will become an on-going thing. The football club are right behind me and have given me the freedom to deliver a great night to remember. Even my family want to come to this

one. Both Joe Lycett and Archie Kelly are big names on TV and it will be great for people to get to see them on the same bill in such a fantastic venue."

Lycett is currently working on new material for a national tour next year and has appeared on TV shows including Live At The Apollo, Taskmaster and Sunday Brunch.

Early bird tickets at £14 are available from Walsall Football Club on 01922 651416 or eticketing.co.uk/walsallfc.

For further information contact Jonny Cole on 07376 248521 or Wayne Thomas on 07551 170675.

Bold as brass at the Grand Theatre

Musicians and actors were in the wings last night (Wednesday) poised to deliver the first in-house production Wolverhampton Grand Theatre for 40 years. Brassed Off sees director Gareth Tudor Price working with professional and local amateur actors and musicians on the story of a pit band going for glory in a national brass band competition. *Hi-de-Hi!* star Jeffrey Holland, pictured, plays ex-miner and conductor, Danny. The play runs to September 2.



Get into the swing with vintage sounds

Fans of big band swing and jive dancing can get vintage kicks at Symphony Hall Birmingham this bank holiday Sunday when the prestigious concert hall is turned into a 1930s style ballroom.

Retro sounds will be heard when the Jim Wynn Swing Orchestra get their joint jumping with arrangements from such as Duke Ellington and Benny Goodman. The Swing Era will perform high-energy Lindy Hop routines after, earlier in the day, offering swing dance lessons at the venue's Ever-After Vintage Tea Dance. The event will also feature the Sugarfoot Stomp DJs. Tickets for the evening concert cost £22.50 to £27.50 and admission to the 11am and 2pm tea dance sessions are £12.50 to £18. No partners required but vintage dress encouraged. See thsh.co.uk or call 0121 780 3333.

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Jack Whitehall

Festival Tales: Edinburgh at 70 (BBC2, 9pm)

Jack Whitehall traces the history of the Edinburgh Festival, as the annual event reaches its 70th anniversary. First conceived in 1947 as part of the 'healing process' for a Britain emerging from the misery and austerity of the Second World War, the Festival was considered a bastion of idealism, and the Fringe was brought into existence in the same year, bringing with it a form of creative anarchy. Jack reflects on the many ground-breaking encounters between artists, musicians, writers and performers that the Edinburgh Festival has facilitated over the years, and examines the role it has played in revolutionising art and culture both in the UK and abroad.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** Nadiya's British Food Adventure. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News. Weather. **1.15** Diamond League Athletics: Zurich Highlights. **2.00** Live Challenge Cup Rugby League Final. Wigan Warriors v Hull FC (Kick-off 3.00pm). **5.30** Flog It! (R) **6.30** BBC News. **6.40** Regional Programme. **6.45** Len Goodman's Partners in Rhyme. Nina Wadia, Gareth Malone, Vikki Stone and Ore Oduba help a pair of would-be poets battle through four rounds of rhyme-based challenges. **7.20** Pointless Celebrities. Lizzie Webb, Chris Steele, Robin Cousins, Rosemary Conley, Iwan Thomas, Katharine Merry, Dr Dawn Harper and Dr Pixie McKenna compete in a 'health and fitness' edition of the quiz. (R) **8.05** Who Dares Wins. Nick Knowles hosts the game show in which two pairs of complete strangers team up, each battling to outdo the other by listing as much as they know about a given subject. Last in the series. **8.45** Casualty. Part two of two. The team of Holby medics continue their efforts to help migrant refugees in need of medical attention on the French coast. However, Dylan is fast becoming frustrated with how little he can offer the camp, and makes a decision he may come to regret. Meanwhile, back in the UK, Jez faces the repercussions of crossing paths with the Ellissons, as an improvised explosive is thrown through the window of his home, placing both Robyn and baby Charlotte in jeopardy. **9.35** Mrs Brown's Boys. Dermot's pre-marriage nerves get the better of him, so he locks himself away in a cupboard. Rory's secret is revealed to his mother. (R) **10.05** BBC News. Weather. National Lottery Update. **10.25** Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Manchester United v Leicester City and Bournemouth v Manchester City. **11.55** People Just Do Nothing. **12.25** Film: In the Electric Mist. (2009) **2.15** Weather for the Week Ahead. **2.20** BBC News.

BBC2

6.20 Coast. (R) **7.20** Film: The Man in the White Suit. (1951) **8.45** Film: The Magnificent Ambersons. (1942) **10.10** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **10.55** Natural World: Beavers Behaving Badly. (R) **11.55** Film: Bedknobs and Broomsticks. (1971) **1.50** Wanted Down Under. (R) **2.20** Mastermind. (R) **2.50** Only Connect. (R) **3.20** Gardeners' World. (R) **4.20** Final Score. **5.20** University Challenge. (R) **5.50** The Big Family Cooking Showdown. Culinary competition, hosted by Zoe Ball and Nadiya Hussain. (R) **6.50** Proms Extra. Katie Derham Soweto Kinch and John Butt review Bach's St John's Passion from Prom 49, and the Charles Mingus Prom, featuring Kandace Springs, Shabaka Hutchings and Christian Scott. **7.30** Nina Conti's Edinburgh Festival. The comedian and ventriloquist showcases some highlights of the festival, chatting to Irvine Welsh about his show Performers and meeting poet and musician Benjamin Clementine. **8.00** Iolo's Great Welsh Parks. Nature expert Iolo Williams visits Padarn Country Park near Llanberis in Snowdonia, hoping to see the likes of ring ouzel, wood warblers and pied flycatchers. **8.30** Dad's Army. Walker is caught smuggling Italian POWs out of camp at night, but far from being a traitor, he is furthering the war effort - and making some money on the side. (R) **9.00** Festival Tales: Edinburgh at 70. Jack Whitehall reflects on the history of the Edinburgh Festival, and the role it has played in revolutionising art and culture on an international scale. **10.00** Performance Live: Get a Round. A trio of friends hell-bent on having a good time, wonder whether a big night out can save the world. Theatrical comedy, starring Sara Cocker, Lowri Evans and Leonie Higgins. **10.40** Film: The Help. (2011) An aspiring journalist in 1960s Mississippi creates controversy by giving black servants the chance to tell their stories. Drama, starring Emma Stone and Viola Davis. **1.00** Film: The German Doctor. (2013) Fact-based drama, starring Alex Brendemuhl. **2.25** This is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Sooty. (R) **6.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.25** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** ITV Racing: The Opening Show. **10.20** Gok's Lunchbox. (R) **11.15** 1000 Heartbeats. (R) **12.15** ITV News: Weather. **12.25** The Chase. (R) **1.30** ITV Racing Live: York Ebor Festival. The fourth and final day of the festival. **3.55** Tipping Point. (R) **4.55** Little Big Shots USA. **5.50** Regional Programme; Weather. **6.00** ITV News: Weather. **6.15** You've Been Framed! Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers, featuring everything from giddy grandmas, cute kids and crazy animals to below-the-belt mishaps, practical jokers and painful-looking accidents. (R) **7.15** Catchphrase. Amanda Tollan, Manish Mehta and Charlotte Myers set out to prove they can 'see it and say it' as Stephen Mulhern challenges them to guess the familiar phrases hidden in animated clues. After the first elimination, the two remaining players battle to reach the Super Catchphrase round, where one of them could win £50,000. (R) **8.00** Les Dawson Forever. Martin Clunes narrates a profile of the comedian, in which his daughter Charlotte Dawson examines the roots of her father's rise to fame. Roy Barraclough reveals how he and Dawson created some of their most famous comic creations, while Rick Wakeman reveals the secrets behind the comedian's trademark routines of deliberately off-key piano playing. **10.00** ITV News: Weather. **10.15** Film: Captain Phillips. (2013) The captain of a cargo ship travelling around the coast of Somalia is taken hostage when pirates raid the vessel. Fact-based thriller, starring Tom Hanks and Barkhad Abdi. **12.45** Jackpot247. **3.00** The Hungry Sailors. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Mobil 1 The Grid. **6.30** Motor Sport: Caterham. **7.00** Motor Sport: British Rally Championship. **7.25** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.50** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.20** Frasier. (R) **8.50** Frasier. (R) **9.20** Frasier. (R) **9.55** Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix Practice 3 Live. Lee McKenzie presents coverage from Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps. **11.25** F1 Meets David Coulthard. **11.55** Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix Qualifying Live. Coverage of the qualifying session at Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps (Start-time 1.00pm). **2.30** World's Most Expensive Cars. **3.35** A Place in the Sun: Winter Sun. (R) **4.35** Big House, Little House. **5.35** Kirstie and Phil's Love It or List It. (R) **6.30** Channel 4 News. **6.55** Film: Ender's Game. (2013) In the future, the human race has survived conflict with an alien race, but the prospect of war breaking out again is a constant threat. A gifted boy is selected as a potential military commander for the coming conflict, and subjected to a gruelling training program to prove his worth. Sci-fi adventure based on Orson Scott Card's novel, starring Asa Butterfield, Harrison Ford and Ben Kingsley. Edited for violence. **9.00** Film: Dumb and Dumber To. (2014) Premiere. Dim-witted friends Harry and Lloyd are reunited after 20 years. When Harry discovers he has a daughter he never knew about, he breaks his friend out of a psychiatric hospital and they go on a road trip with the intention of fulfilling parental responsibilities neither of them is capable of. Comedy sequel, starring Jim Carrey and Jeff Daniels. **11.10** Film: Ted. (2012) A boy's magical living teddy remains his friend into adulthood, creating tension with his girlfriend. Comedy, starring Mark Wahlberg, with the voice of Seth MacFarlane. **1.10** Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. Gordon Ramsay revisits three restaurants he tried to save. (R) **2.00** Hollyoaks. Omnibus. Darren plans to take Shane down, Mandy panics over a letter from social services and Brody sabotages Scott's plans. **4.10** Location, Location, Location. Phil Spencer heads to Nottinghamshire to help find a home for a couple who have spent most of their relationship living with their parents. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.10** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Animals Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **11.00** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.00** Police Interceptors: Rookies and Raids. (R) **1.00** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **2.00** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **3.00** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **4.00** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R) **5.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. (R) **6.00** Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. The enforcement agents try to mediate a dispute in a takeaway, and deal with rent evaders living in potentially deadly conditions. Plus, a businessman faces financial ruin. (R) **7.00** Cricket on 5. England v West Indies. Highlights of the second day of the Second Test in the three-match series, which takes place at Headingley. With commentary and analysis from Mark Nicholas, Michael Vaughan, Geoffrey Boycott and Simon Hughes. **8.00** Supernatural Nazis. New series. The role of occultism in Nazi Germany, revealing how religion and the supernatural were used in Hitler's pursuit of power. The first programme examines how the Nazis corrupted the teachings of Christianity to influence people to see Hitler as a messiah figure, and examines accusations that the Pope did too little to oppose them. **8.55** 5 News Weekend. **9.00** Football on 5: The Championship. Colin Murray presents highlights from the latest games in the Championship, which included Bristol City v Aston Villa at Ashton Gate, Nottingham Forest v Leeds United at The City Ground, and Middlesbrough v Preston North End at Riverside Stadium. **10.00** Football on 5: Goal Rush. Goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, which included Rochdale v Bury, Wigan Athletic v Portsmouth, Mansfield Town v Luton Town, and Yeovil Town v Coventry City. **10.30** Britain's Favourite Abba Songs. A countdown of the Swedish pop group's 20 most popular songs, with celebrity fans including Jane McDonald and Liz McAlarnon introducing their favourite clips. (R) **12.00** Access. **12.10** SuperCasino. **3.10** Delete. **4.30** Access. (R) **4.40** Great Scientists. (R) **5.10** Nick's Quest. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four **7.00** The Brain with David Eagleman **8.00** Fossil Wonderlands: Nature's Hidden Treasures **9.00** Inspector Montalbano **10.45** Top of the Pops: 1984 **11.15** Billy Fury: The Sound of Fury **12.45** Britain's Most Fragile Treasure **1.45** The World's Most Expensive Stolen Paintings **2.45** Fossil Wonderlands: Nature's Hidden Treasures **3.45** Close **ITV2** **12.35** Harry Hill's Alien Fun Capsule **1.05** You've Been Framed and Famous! **2.10** Film: Honey (2003) **3.10** FYI Daily **3.15** Film: Honey (2003) **4.05** Film: Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **5.05** FYI Daily **5.10** Film: Looney Tunes: Back in Action (2003) **5.55** Film: Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **6.55** FYI Daily **7.00** Film: Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **8.00** Film: The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (2006) **9.00** FYI Daily **9.05** Film: The Fast and the Furious: Tokyo Drift (2006) **10.10** Family Guy **12.05** American Dad! **1.05** The Keith Lemon Sketch Show **2.05** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records: Bunkingly Big Hits **2.55** Teleshopping **5.55** ITV2 Nightscreen **ITV3** **2.50** Film: Casablanca (1942) **3.50** FYI Daily **3.55** Film: Casablanca (1942) **4.55** Film: The Queen (2006) **5.55** FYI Daily **6.00** Film: The Queen (2006) **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Foyle's War **11.05** Law & Order: UK **1.05** Wycliffe **2.00** Rising Damp **2.25** ITV3 Nightscreen **ITV4** **11.50** Cycling: Vuelta a Espana **12.50** Minder **1.50** The Professionals **2.50** The Darts Show **3.15** World Series of Darts: Perth **7.15** Women's Rugby World Cup 2017. **10.15** Cycling: Vuelta a Espana **11.15** Film: The Krays (1990) **12.20** FYI Daily **12.25** Film: The Krays (1990) **1.40** Minder **2.45** Sporting Funnies **2.50** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping **E4** **11.05** Don't Tell the Bride **12.05** Streetmate **1.05** The Goldbergs **2.35** The Big Bang Theory **6.45** Film: Shallow Hal (2001) **9.00** Film: Immortals (2011) **11.10** Gogglebox **1.15** Tattoo Fixers **2.20** Rude Tube **3.15** Gogglebox **4.05** How I Met Your Mother **4.55** Rude(ish) Tube **Film4** **11.00** The Dark Crystal (1982) **1.00** Chalet Girl (2011) **2.50** The Cat in the Hat (2003) **4.25** Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters (2013) **6.40** About Time (2013) **9.00** Lucy (2014) **10.40** The Guest (2014) **12.40** Taxi Driver (1976) **3.00** Close

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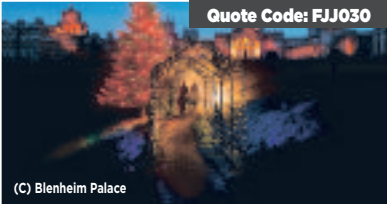
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CHRISTMAS AT BLENHEIM & BATH'S FESTIVE MARKET

Quote Code: FJJ030



Departing Saturday 9 December 2017

Blenheim at Christmas is a marvel not to miss, and the after-dark landscape lights are an other-worldly delight. Join us for all this, plus a day at Bath's Christmas Market along with return travel, hotel and English breakfast.

Price Includes...

- ✓ Overnight stay at a 3 or 4 star Reading/Wiltshire area hotel with full English breakfast
- ✓ Visit to Bath Christmas Market
- ✓ Visit and admission to Blenheim Palace (value £24.90)

2 days, by coach

only £119.95pp

View product online at www.omega-holidays.com/FJJ030

Single room supplements £30pp. Subject to availability.

CHRISTMAS AT KEW GARDENS AND LONDON

Quote Code: PUK435



Saturday departures, 2 & 16 December 2017

See Kew's winter landscape at night as an enchanting Illuminated Trail of music and lights leads you round the Gardens as you have never seen them before...

Price Includes...

- ✓ Overnight stay at a 3 or 4 star hotel within 30 miles of central London with full English breakfast
- ✓ Timed admission ticket to the Kew Gardens Illuminated Trail
- ✓ Free shopping time in central London on Sunday

2 days, by coach

only £129.95pp

View product online at www.omega-holidays.com/PUK435

Single room supplements £30pp. Subject to availability.

CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT

at the Royal Albert Hall

Quote Code: PEA398



Departing Saturday 16 December 2017

Take time out in the final countdown to Christmas to enjoy this candle-lit concert of popular carols, classical pieces and readings, all exquisitely staged in 18th-century costume. This great-value break also includes free time for last-minute gift shopping...

Price Includes...

- ✓ Overnight stay at a 3 or 4 star hotel within 30 miles of central London with full English breakfast
- ✓ A Circle ticket (face value £26.47) for the Saturday evening performance of Carols by Candlelight (upgrades available)
- ✓ Return coach transfer to the Royal Albert Hall
- ✓ Free time in London on Sunday

2 days, by coach

only £149.95pp

View product online at www.omega-holidays.com/PEA398

Single room supplements £30pp. Subject to availability.

Quote Code: RMP208

LONDON'S WINTER WONDERLAND



Saturday departures, 18 November & 16 December 2017

London's Hyde Park transforms this November and December into a dazzling spectacle of sparkle, with 200+ Christmas Market stalls, ice rink, ice kingdom, carousels, Big Wheel, and even a cocktail bar made of ice.

Price Includes...

- ✓ Overnight stay at a 4 star hotel within 20 miles of central London with full English breakfast
- ✓ Return transfer from hotel to Hyde Park
- ✓ Free time in London on Sunday

2 days, by coach

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CHOICE



Tom Burke (left)

Strike – The Cuckoo's Calling

(BBC1, 9.05pm)

New series. Supermodel Lula Landry falls to her death from a Mayfair balcony and the police conclude that she committed suicide, but Lula's adoptive brother John Bristow believes she was murdered and that key evidence has been overlooked. He calls upon private investigator Cormoran Strike to examine the death further and the penniless and effectively homeless PI takes the case. Crime thriller based on books written by JK Rowling under the pseudonym Robert Galbraith, starring Tom Burke and Holliday Grainger. The second episode will be shown tomorrow.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** BBC News. **10.00** Sunday Morning Live. **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News: Weather. **1.15** Fake or Fortune? (R) **2.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Songs of Praise. **4.35** Film: Toy Story 2. (1999) Animated sequel, with the voice of Tom Hanks.

6.05 BBC News.**6.20** Regional Programme.

6.30 **Countryfile.** Ellie Harrison and Steve Brown present the show from the Llyn Peninsula on Wales' North West coast. Ellie explores the seagrass habitat and joins a marine conservation project studying the region's fish, while Steve meets dairy farmers who deliver their milk door to door and invents a new flavour of ice cream.

7.30 **Diana, 7 Days.** Documentary exploring the week following Princess Diana's death, with first-hand accounts from those who found themselves at the centre of the ensuing events, including then prime minister Tony Blair, members of the royal household, and family members including Princes William and Harry.

9.05 **Strike – The Cuckoo's Calling.** New series. Private detective Cormoran Strike is called in to investigate the apparent suicide of a supermodel. Crime thriller based on books by JK Rowling, starring Tom Burke. The second episode will be shown tomorrow.

10.05 BBC News.**10.25** Regional Programme.

10.35 **Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman reviews the latest Premier League action, featuring Liverpool v Arsenal at Anfield, Chelsea v Everton at Stamford Bridge, Tottenham Hotspur v Burnley at White Hart Lane and West Bromwich Albion v Stoke City at the Hawthorns. The fixture at Anfield was an early chance for the Reds and Gunners to test themselves against another of the leading contenders, while Chelsea continued their title defence against the much-changed Toffees.

11.45 **Live at the Apollo.** Leading performers on the stand-up circuit share their light-hearted views on modern life. (R)

12.30 Weather for the Week Ahead. **12.35** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 The Instant Gardener. (R) **7.00** Garden Rescue. (R) **7.45** Gardeners' World. (R) **8.45** The Beechgrove Garden. **9.15** Countryfile. (R) **10.15** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.45** Lorraine's Fast, Fresh and Easy Food. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Coast. (R) **1.45** Triathlon World Series: Stockholm. **3.30** Equestrian: European Championships.

6.00 **Tribes, Predators & Me.** Gordon Buchanan joins a group of Bushmen in Botswana's Kalahari Desert to learn their ancient secrets for surviving on foot among wild lions. They teach him how to make fire, find honey, and gather water from desert plants, and the filmmaker watches as they hunt with poisoned arrows and track predatory lions. (R)

7.00 **Gordon Buchanan: Elephant Family & Me.** The first of two programmes in which Gordon Buchanan encounters a family of African elephants in the wilds of Kenya, and attempts to gain their trust so he can observe them up close in their natural habitat. He enlists the aid of an expert from the David Sheldrick Wildlife Trust to learn about their behaviour as he follows an elephant with a new calf, and discovers what it takes for the youngest of the world's largest land animals to survive in the face of a challenging environment. (R)

8.00 **Dragons' Den.** The panel cast an eye over plans for furniture made from old aeroplane parts, organic dog treats, healthy snacks and a company that buys and sells books. Presented by Evan Davis.

9.00 **Astronauts: Do You Have What It Takes?** The candidates are put through more demanding tests as they are pushed to their limits in a simulated emergency splashdown.

10.00 **III Behaviour.** Charlie is assumed to have committed suicide. Joel decides to visit Kira so he can comfort her, and finds himself enjoying taking over his friend's role in the family.

11.00 **Film: The Ides of March.** (2011) A presidential campaign worker must decide where his loyalties lie as dark secrets come to light. Drama, directed by and starring George Clooney.

12.35 **Film: Echoes from the Dead.** (2013) **2.10** Sign Zone: Countryfile. (R) **3.05** Holby City. (R) **4.05** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. **6.10** Grizzly Tales for Gruesome Kids. (R) **6.20** Sooty. (R) **6.30** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.15** Super 4. (R) **7.30** Ninjabo: Rebooted. (R) **8.00** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **8.25** ITV News. **8.30** Weekend. **9.25** Film: K-9. (1989) **11.15** Love Your Garden. (R) **12.15** ITV News: Weather. **12.25** James Martin's French Adventure. (R) **12.55** Joanna Lumley's Postcards. (R) **1.25** Catchphrase. (R) **2.10** Long Lost Family. (R) **3.10** Bear Grylls Survival School. (R) **3.40** **Film: Superman.** (1978) Comic-strip adventure, starring Christopher Reeve.

6.30 Regional Programme; Weather.**6.40** ITV News: Weather.

7.00 **Possibly the Best Adverts in the World.** Hugh Dennis narrates a two-hour special in which celebrities select their favourite commercials from TV and the internet in a range of categories. Bill Bailey chooses adverts for food, Fay Ripley introduces health and beauty, Angus Deayton focuses on cars, Chris Ramsey looks at sweets, Joe Lycett tackles toys, and Chris Kamara looks back at cigarettes and alcohol.

9.05 **Victoria.** New series. The second series of the drama about the early years of Queen Victoria's reign begins after the birth of her first child. She resumes her royal duties sooner than expected, and quickly becomes convinced that her husband and the prime minister are concealing troubling news about the conflict in Afghanistan, and turns to the Duke of Wellington for answers. Victoria also faces problems at home, as Albert's family descend on the palace for the christening, and continue to make plans for the future of the monarchy.

10.10 ITV News: Weather.

10.20 **Judge Rinder's Crime Stories.** Barrister Robert Rinder reveals how the parents of a teenager killed by a speeding car campaigned for a change in the law that had allowed the driver to escape justice. (R)

11.20 **5 Gold Rings.** Game show, hosted by Phillip Schofield. (R)

12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Motorsport UK. **3.50** Britbri Superbike Championship Highlights. **4.40** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.00 Para Triathlon: Superhero Tri. **7.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.25** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Frasier. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Sunday Brunch. **12.00** Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix Live Build Up. Steve Jones presents a preview of the 12th round of the season. **12.35** Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix Live. Coverage of the 12th round of the season (Start-time 1.00pm).

3.10 Formula 1 Belgian Grand Prix Live Reaction. **4.00** The Crystal Maze. (R) **5.00** Channel 4 News. **5.30** 50 Greatest Kids Films.

7.00 **Amazing Spaces Shed of the Year.** George Clarke presents the Pubs and Entertainment and Unexpected categories. Unusual structures featured include a hedgehog rescue centre, a West Country whisky den, a recreation of the Jedis from Doctor Who, and the UK's smallest cathedral.

8.00 **From Russia to Iran: Crossing the Wild Frontier.** Levison Wood travels into the badlands of Dagestan, an area the foreign office warns against visiting. He experiences the hospitality of the local warrior clans and takes a journey on horseback to the ancient city of Derbent – with an armed guide to fend off wolves and bears. He then moves on to Azerbaijan, a country where extreme wealth exists alongside subsistence poverty.

9.00 **Film: Taken 3.** (2014) Premiere. Ex-CIA agent Bryan Mills' efforts to finally live a quiet life are shattered by the death of his ex-wife. Just when things seemingly can't get any worse, he is framed for her murder and must fight to clear his name. Action thriller sequel, starring Liam Neeson.

11.15 **Film: The Wolf of Wall Street.** (2013) A New York stockbroker rises from unemployment to become one of the richest men in the city's financial elite through an illegal scheme to defraud investors. His wealth brings him an outrageously debauched lifestyle, but comes at a price as the FBI become suspicious of his manipulation of the markets. Fact-based drama, starring Leonardo DiCaprio.

2.30 Speed with Guy Martin. Guy tries to cross the English Channel on a flying bicycle. (R) **3.55** Gillette World Sport. **4.25** KOTV Boxing Weekly. **4.50** Mobil 1 The Grid. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Poppy Cat. **6.10** Little Princess. (R) **6.25** Mr Men. **6.35** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.40** Milkshake! Bopping About. (R) **6.45** Simon. (R) **6.50** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.55** Wisper. (R) **7.05** Bob the Builder. (R) **7.15** Fireman Sam. (R) **7.25** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.30** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.50** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.15** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.35** Floogals. (R)

8.50 Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.00** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.15** Digby Dragon. (R) **9.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.55** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **10.10** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.40** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.30** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **12.00** Toddlers Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R)

1.00 Puppies Make You Laugh Out Loud. (R) **2.00** Cats Make You Laugh Out Loud 3. (R) **3.00** All New Traffic Cops. (R) **4.00** All New Traffic Cops. (R) **5.00** All New Traffic Cops. (R)

6.00 **All New Traffic Cops.** An intoxicated driver heads the wrong way down the A1 near Leeds. (R)

7.00 **Cricket on 5.** England v West Indies.

8.00 **Can't I Pay? We'll Take It Away.** Agents Stewart and Ian head to Manchester, where a landlord is owed £8,000 in rent arrears and has already called for police back-up. Meanwhile, Brian and Del chase £3,000. (R)

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 **Funny Women: The Mel & Sue Story.** Profile of entertainers Mel Giedroyc and Sue Perkins, who have become famed for their irreverent, raised-eyebrow humour and cheeky innuendo. Both hailing from south London, Mel and Sue met at Cambridge and like so many others, honed their self-effacing double act on the stages of Edinburgh before breaking into TV fronting the Channel 4's daytime chat show Light Lunch. While at one point Mel came close to bankruptcy, the duo's luck was in when, in 2010, they were asked to host an unlikely sounding new show called The Great British Bake Off. Its enormous – though unexpected – success established them as top-of-the-game presenting talent.

10.30 **Sue Perkins' Comedy Greats: The Entertainers.**

12.20 Named and Shamed: Greatest Celebrity Scandals. (R) **1.10** SuperCasino. **3.10** Delete.

DIGITAL

BBC Four

7.00 BBC Proms 2017: Chopin Preludes **9.00** Gluck: Who Did She Think He Was? **10.00** Metal at the BBC **10.30** Muse @ Reading Festival 2017 **12.00** Queen: From Rags to Rhassidy **1.00** Jeff Lynne's ELO in Concert **2.00** Metal at the BBC **2.30** Gluck: Who Did She Think He Was? **3.30** Close

ITV2

12.00 Ninja Warrior UK **1.00** Mr Bean **2.05** You've Been Framed! Gold **2.40** Totally You've Been Framed! Gold **3.40** Film: Around the World in 80 Days (2004) **4.40** FYI Daily **4.45** Film: Around the World in 80 Days (2004) **5.00** Film: Despicable Me (2010) **7.00** FYI Daily **7.05** Film: Despicable Me (2010) **7.55** Film: Pacific Rim (2013) **8.55** FYI Daily **9.00** Film: Pacific Rim (2013) **10.30** Family Guy **12.30** American Dad! **1.25** The Cleveland Show **2.15** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

11.25 Film: Carry On Girls (1973) **12.30** FYI Daily **1.25** Film: Carry On Girls (1973) **1.15** Foyle's War **3.15** Royal Stories **3.50** Rosemary & Thyme **4.55** Film: The Young Victoria (2009) **5.55** FYI Daily **6.00** Film: The Young Victoria (2009) **7.00** Lewis **9.00** Sunday Night at the Palladium **10.00** Law & Order: UK **12.05** Film: The English Patient (1996) **1.05** FYI Daily **1.10** Film: The English Patient (1996) **2.55** Wycliffe **3.50** The Darling Buds of May **4.45** Rising Damp **5.10** On the Buses **5.35** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4

5.45 British Touring Cars – Crashes and Smashes **6.00** Storage Wars **7.00** Cycling: Vuelta a Espana **8.00** World Series of Darts: Perth **12.00** Film: Clear and Present Danger (1994) **1.00** FYI Daily **1.05** Film: Clear and Present Danger (1994) **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

11.00 Made in Chelsea: Ibiza **12.00** Don't Tell the Bride **1.00** Streets **2.05** Film: Muppet Treasure Island (1996) **4.05** The Goldbergs **5.00** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: Predators (2010) **11.05** Tattoo Fixers on Holiday **12.10** Don't Tell the Bride **1.15** Body Builders **2.20** Gogglebox **3.15** Ride Tube

Film4

11.00 Spy Kids 4: All the Time in the World (2011) **1.00** Ever After: A Cinderella Story (1998) **3.25** Mrs Doubtfire (1993) **5.50** Avatar (2009) **9.00** The World's End (2013) **11.10** An American Werewolf in London (1981) **1.05** The Warriors (1979) **3.00** Close

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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
The Theory of Everything, ITV, 9pm
 Biopic of Stephen Hawking, exploring the renowned astrophysicist's romance with future wife Jane during their time at university in the 1960s and his initial diagnosis with motor neurone disease, which doctors believed would lead to his death within two years. Undaunted by deteriorating health, he continued his groundbreaking research into the origins of the universe. Starring an Oscar-winning Eddie Redmayne, with Felicity Jones and David Thewlis. (2014)

TUESDAY
Bedtime Stories, BBC2, 2pm
 A downtrodden handyman is forced to look after his niece and nephew. He soon wins them over with his knack for telling exciting stories, but to their surprise the tall tales start coming true – and as the children make their own suggestions, the results become even more incredible. Fantasy comedy, starring Adam Sandler, Keri Russell and Russell Brand. (2008)



The Theory of Everything, Monday, ITV, 9pm

WEDNESDAY
The Muppets, BBC2, 1.45pm
 Three fans of the famous puppet variety show discover a powerful businessman is going to knock down the Muppet theatre and drill for oil on the site. They track down frontman Kermit the frog and persuade him to reunite his co-stars, so they can put on one last performance to save the venue. Comedy, starring Jason Segel. (2011)

THURSDAY
Badge of Betrayal, Channel 5, 3.15pm
 A woman discovers her supposedly dead son is still alive, his demise having been faked by her ex-husband as part of an elaborate plot to destroy her life. However, finding the evidence to prove her story turns out to be a difficult challenge. Thriller, starring Julie Benz and Samantha Ferris. (2014)

FRIDAY
The Box, BBC1, 12.10am
 A couple receive a box that will make them rich at the press of a button – but if they do so, someone will die. Sci-fi thriller, with Cameron Diaz and James Marsden. (2009)

Margaret reveals all about her life in the spotlight

American drama The Handmaid's Tale made its UK television debut on Channel 4 in May and became one of the biggest successes of the year, receiving 13 Emmy nominations before being renewed for a second season set to air in 2018.

Based on the 1985 book of the same name, the show imagines a future in which nuclear war has left a large percentage of the human population infertile and young women are forced to sleep with powerful men called Leaders and bear their children.

The young women – known as Handmaids – are assigned to the men and are essentially raped, in warped rituals involving the Leaders' wives, in a bid to fall pregnant and continue the human race.

The story is told through the eyes of a Handmaid called Offred (played by Elisabeth Moss) and switches between the present horror she is living in and the past, as the world starts to tumble into the chaos and disorder that has led

to a totalitarian regime.

Perhaps one of the reasons the dark drama has been so successful is that many feel the subject matter is incredibly prescient given the Donald Trump administration, the feminism movement and the instability of the world.

Indeed, the book's author, Canadian Margaret Atwood has claimed that the 2016 US Presidential Election led to an increase in sales of The Handmaid's Tale even before the success of the aforementioned TV adaptation.

Atwood's star is now shining brighter than ever, but her success is not only down to this one novel – for decades she has been universally acclaimed as Canada's greatest living writer.

She is a winner of the Arthur C Clarke Award and Prince of Asturias Award for Literature, and has been shortlisted for the Booker Prize five times, winning once for her historical novel The Blind Assassin.

In 2001, she was inducted into

Canada's Walk of Fame and is also a founder of the Writers' Trust of Canada, a non-profit literary organisation that seeks to encourage Canada's writing community.

Atwood is also an inventor, and has developed the LongPen that facilitates the remote robotic writing of documents.

While she is best known for her work as a novelist, she has also published 15 books of poetry, with many of her pieces inspired by myths and fairytales, which have been interests of hers from an early age.

And her upbringing is one of the key topics up for discussion when the writer and activist meets up with Alan Yentob in Toronto for tonight's Imagine.

Atwood explains how a childhood spent between the wilderness of northern Quebec and the city helped shape her vision of herself and the world, set alight her imagination and set her forth on a path to literary success.



Imagine – Margaret Atwood: You Have Been Warned!, Monday, BBC1, 10.30pm

BEST OF THE REST

are keen to show they are the best in Britain. They are about to be faced with cake week, as they whip up a fruity signature bake, before tackling a children's tea party classic for the technical challenge and then creating a tricky illusion cake for the showstopper. But who will be more nervous – the contestants or Channel 4 as it waits to find out if the viewers have followed the Bake Off to its new home?

WEDNESDAY
Love Your Home and Garden
ITV, 8pm
 The most recent run of Love Your Garden may have only finished last week, but Alan Titchmarsh is already back with a new series – and this time, he's not just transforming deserving people's backyards, he's also tackling their interiors as well. In the first episode, he travels to Banbury, Oxfordshire, to meet Donna and Lee, and their daughters Claudia, 12, and Leoni, 9. Four years ago, Donna suffered a near-fatal heart attack which left her with severely restricted sight, and her young daughters now act as her carers. Alan discovers



Educating Greater Manchester, Thursday, Channel 4, 9pm

that the family's cramped, cluttered rooms and dark interiors are making it difficult for Donna to move around the house without tripping, so he sets about creating a light-filled space, while also turning the garden from a place currently used for storing rubbish into somewhere the girls can play.

THURSDAY
Gypsy Kids: Our Secret World
Channel 5, 9pm
 They may be young, but the children featured in this documentary series are often experienced beyond their years, thanks to the freedoms and challenges that come with being part of one of the most marginalised communities in Britain. In the first episode of the series, we meet nine-year-old Irish traveller Margaret and her cousins, who are being evicted by bailiffs every seven days – and after they recently pulled their trailers into a school playground, resulting in 900 pupils being told

to say home, emotions are running high. Meanwhile, nine-year-old Indiana is moving into a chalet on her family's site, which means she will have a bed to herself – and, for the first time, a bathroom inside her home.

Educating Greater Manchester
Channel 4, 9pm
 New series. Life at Harrop Fold Secondary in Salford, Greater Manchester, a school at the heart of a changing community, following the teachers dealing with daily events. In this first episode, the pupils are comparing Trump's hairstyle with Hitler's, writing rude words on the back of a delivery van, and adjusting to an influx of students from a range of foreign countries. The school also has to respond to the shockwaves of the terrorist attack at the Ariana Grande concert, which eight of the pupils and one teacher attended.

FRIDAY
World Cup Live
ITV, 7.15pm
 Malta v England (Kick-off 7.45pm). Mark Pougatch presents coverage of the Group F qualifier from Ta' Qali National Stadium in Attard. Malta have lost every group match so far, but produced a spirited display in last October's reverse fixture at Wembley.



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We love families of all shapes and sizes! Bring a picnic, bring your dog and enjoy the canal side location. Take part in our free Garden Gnome Hunt or Secret Fairy Door Trail and watch hot glass blowing demonstrations. Why travel for hours when you can visit us right on your doorstep?

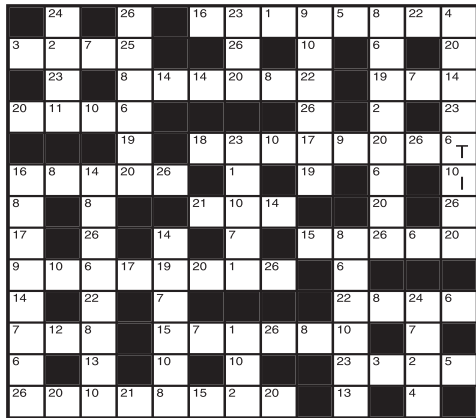


BRAIN GYM

No.444

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| B | H | Q | J | V | S | T | C | K | L | A | Y | M | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| I | D | Z | F | P | G | O | E | R | N | X | W | U | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

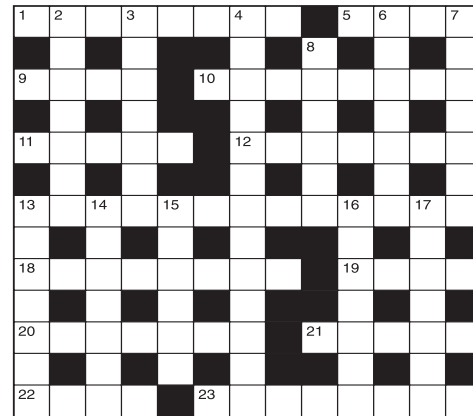
Cryptic Clues:

Across

- One instrument before another in the dance (8)
- This deck looks just the same both ways (4)
- Just one appearing in distant setting (4)
- He seeks perfection for one transaction before it's ruined (8)
- Coming from the chandler's is a long rope (5)
- Framework on which climbers are trained (7)
- Used by one with a view to entertainment (10,3)
- Make a record showing the range of a voice (8)
- Sounds like part of a gun emplacement (4)
- Applaud an application to the insurance company, we hear (7)
- Appears to observe the manuscript (5)
- Waterproof clothes used by painters (4)
- A man of scruples, as far as physics are concerned! (8)

Down

- Like some stonework on a track (7)
- Hurried back with the price to present an account (7)
- Master pleaded for a ship (6,7)
- Nothing strangely rising from these sources (7)
- One with a complaint not complaining! (7)
- What the drummer produces for a military spectacle? (6)
- Road not affected by severe weather (7)
- Record one visit cut short - that's reasonable (7)
- Long-range spectacles (6)
- An accumulation reposing in the bird sanctuary? (4-3)
- Makes the situation grave (7)



Quick Clues:

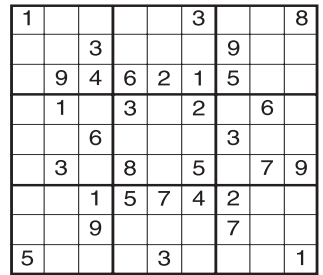
Across

- Carry on (8)
- Great potentate (4)
- Stupefy (4)
- Acute poverty (8)
- Droll (5)
- Scintillate (7)
- Declaration (13)
- Curb (8)
- Wise (4)
- Sedition (7)
- Bolt (5)
- Appear (4)
- Estrange (8)

Down

- Open-air (7)
- Stress (7)
- Inadvertent (13)
- Spot (7)
- Esteem (7)
- Hit (6)
- Corsairs (7)
- Indecent (7)
- Attack (6)
- Errand (7)
- Overlook (7)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid above so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 8 | 3 |
| 3 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 9 | 4 |
| 9 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 5 |
| 8 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 2 |
| 2 | 7 | 4 | 9 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 8 |
| 6 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 9 |
| 5 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 1 |
| 7 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 6 |

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Lilies; 4 Ransom; 9 Gives one's word; 10 Collect; 11 Natta; 12 Skate; 14 Hewed; 18 Okapi; 19 Rosette; 21 Knock-out punch; 22 Nudity; 23 Wagers. Down: 1 Legacy; 2 Live like a lord; 3 Ensur; 5 Absence; 6 Short sentence; 7 Models; 8 Knots; 13 Trinket; 15 Look in; 16 Trout; 17 Meshes; 20 Sepia.
QUICK - Across: 1 Hidden; 4 Intend; 9 Off one's own bat; 10 America; 11 Erie; 12 Leap; 14 Delay; 18 Attic; 19 Oversee; 21 Head over heels; 22 Sheath; 23 Crater. Down: 1 Hookah; 2 Differentiate; 3 Ennu; 5 Nowhere; 6 Embarrassment; 7 Dither; 8 Essay; 13 Pick out; 15 Pathos; 16 Bower; 17 Geyser; 20 Ether.

Quiz

- How is the convolvulus genus of plants also known?
- Which flower is depicted on the Royal British Legion's logo?
- On which part of the body is a lobotomy performed?
- In Greek mythology, from whose blood is the winged horse Pegasus supposed to have sprung?
- Which major London store removed the royal warrants from its shopfront in December 2000?
- What was the capital of the Confederacy in the US Civil War?
- Who was the first Hollywood legend to feature on a US postage stamp?
- In which year was the GLC abolished?
- What is the medical specialty concerned with the study of disease processes called?
- Which late US actor's real surname was Matuschanskayasky?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 A fragrant shrub; 2 Parakeet; 3 Malcolm McDowell; 4 Outer Hebrides; 5 Daniele Gatti; 6 Richard III; 7 Xylophone; 8 Friends of the Earth; 9 Opal; 10 Dave Bassett.

Niner: HERALDING

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

959156
2924586
6536874

gives a participant,
gives a casual participant,
gives a second casual participant.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|



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Enjoy living it up like the A-listers

IT'S not uncommon to go to Los Angeles and bump into an A-lister or four. I once saw Johnny Depp about 15 minutes after I'd ogled his star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

But, when celebrities need a quick escape from the glitz and paparazzi, they hop on a plane to Los Cabos. The Mexican hideaway, on the sun-baked tip of the southern Baja California peninsula, is just two and a half hours from LAX airport. Probably less if you're zooming over via private jet, like the Kardashian clan.

Los Cabos has two major towns connected by 'the Corridor' - San Jose del Cabo (more chilled) and Cabo San Lucas (more lively) - and a whole load of palm-fringed beach in between. Here are seven reasons why celebrities like Jennifer Aniston, George Clooney and Cameron Diaz are such big fans of the destination...

1. The Thunderbirds-style villas

Cindy Crawford and George Clooney built side-by-side 'Casamigos' Cabo villas, Sylvester Stallone spends his winters in Pedregal, and Jennifer Aniston practically has her own hideaway on a luxury hotel complex. Mainly only visible by boat and nestled in cliffs - just like Thunderbirds' Tracy HQ.

2. The whale watching

You may not need to go on a boat trip to see the spectacle of grey, blue and humpback whales. From the end of November to March, chances are you'll be lucky enough to spot them from your sunlounger.

3. The super spas

Spas are anything but low-key in Los Cabos. Jennifer Lopez, Jessica Alba and Cameron Diaz are all said to be regulars at Las Ventanas al Paraiso's spa, which resembles a colonial Mexican hacienda.

4. The Mexican cuisine

Nothing quite hits the spot like authentic creamy guac, tortillas and tacos.

Sunloungers and sea views at Grand Velas



5. The statement art

Where do the likes of George Clooney and Leonardo DiCaprio go to get one-off works of art? They've been known to browse San Jose Del Cabo's famous gallery district (artcabo.com); a downtown hive of creativity featuring original paintings, photography, sculpture, pottery and glasswork.

6. The Sea of Cortez cruises

You're unlikely to see celebs on guided excursions - although Cabo Adventures do offer an excellent Luxury Day Sailing trip for \$109 per person for four hours (cabo-

adventures.com). A-listers are more likely to charter their squad a super-luxe yacht.

7. The celebrity standards

When your private butler shows you to your room and asks if you'd like the contents of your suitcase unpacked while you hit the beach, you know the resort's got celebrity appeal. That the level of service at the new super-luxe Grand Velas Los Cabos. The 304-room resort opened in late 2016 and Hollywood actress Juliette Lewis was one of the first to check-in. From sunloungers surrounding the triple-tier infinity pool, to serene beach

A surfer on Los Cabos beach at sunset



cabanas there are countless places to kick back and feast on insanely tasty tostadas.

How to get there...

Rooms from US \$548 (£434 approx) per person per night, all-inclusive. Visit loscabos.grandvelas.com

Fly from London Heathrow to Cabo San Lucas SJD via Mexico City with Aeromexico, from £499.47 in November 2017. Visit aeromexico.com

For details on Los Cabos in Mexico, visit visitloscabos.travel

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Serving up to 10 Sadler's craft ales at any one time, aside fresh, seasonal food created by head chef Andre Pelaud and his 5 star kitchen team, creating sophisticated twists on Black Country favorites plus fresh fish & seafood dishes, top quality steaks and grills, The Windsor Castle aim to exceed expectations through their focus on quality. From produce to service attention to detail is their focus.

Awarded four stars from Visit England, The Windsor Castle boast four small yet perfectly presented bedrooms for you to rest your head. Emily & Gareth refurbished the upstairs space at The Windsor Castle into bed & breakfast facilities in 2013, 'I love for guests to stay with us so they get to enjoy the full Windsor Castle experience, the longer you are here, the better experience we can provide. We genuinely get so much satisfaction from happy customers leaving us great feedback and especially when we have customers who return again & again we know we have succeeded.'



The Windsor Castles history dates back to 1900, then situated in Oldbury attached to the original Windsor Castle Brewery, home to Sadler's ales. Emily's grandfather, Jack Sadler born at the brewery passed his knowledge and passion of brewing on to his son John Sadler who re-opened the brewery in Lye in 2004 and bought the family tradition back to life. It has since gone

from strength to strength and the Sadler's brand is something they are extremely proud of at The Windsor Castle.

With the Sadler family not being one to stand still, the summer has bought the latest venture to their portfolio... Nestled away on the top floor at The Windsor Castle, if you know where to look, you'll find Dr Hardwicke's Gin Emporium. Their 1920's inspired art deco gin emporium boasts 40+ different and exciting gins & welcomes gin lovers with open arms to sample not just the gins themselves but also learn a little of this wonderful spirit's fascinating story. You can enjoy some of the finest of the English distilleries and the best rest of the world has to offer in a bespoke serve. Be adventurous or try their recommendations, there is certainly something for everyone. Dr Hardwicke's Gin Emporium is the perfect place to enjoy pre dinner drinks or relax in comfortable surroundings with friends for a 'gintastic' evening. With them now running popular gin tasting and cocktail masterclass experiences and soon we will be opening their own gin school where you can enjoy the unique opportunity of spending a day with their gin guru learning, tasting & creating your own individual

gin recipe. Dr Hardwicke's Gin Emporium is the perfect setting for a private party, simply hire the room for a buffet and drinks party or they can create tailor made gin tasting packages for private parties.



The Windsor Castle have something unique and exciting to offer and are on our doorstep, give them a visit, you won't be disappointed. For all enquirers call **01384 897809**.





First time buyer activity continues to see growth

First time buyer activity continued to grow in the UK in June with lending to this sector up by 26% compared to the previous month and up 9% year on year.

The latest figures from UK Finance show that this equated to 36,000 loans, up 22% month on month and 6% year on year.

The data also shows that home owner remortgage activity totalled £6 billion, up 5% by value on May and 7% year on year with loans totalling 34,300, up 5% month on month and 6% on a year ago.

Gross buy to let totalled £3 billion, up 3% on May and up 3% compared to June 2016. These equated to 19,700 loans, up 3% month on month and 6% year on year.

On a non-seasonally adjusted basis, UK Finance data shows that mortgage lending in the second quarter also rose. Home buyers borrowed £34.4 billion, up 18% quarter on quarter and 24% on the same quarter in 2016.

Within this, first time buyers borrowed £14.8 billion, up 18% and 10% while home movers borrowed £19.6 billion, up 19% and 21%. Home owner remortgage activity totalled £16.9 billion, down 11% by value on the first quarter but up 1% on a year ago.

Gross buy to let totalled £8.4 billion, down 6% compared to the first three months of the year but up 5% on the second quarter of 2016.

"June's figures show a busy month in the mortgage market, with home movers having their highest monthly activity levels for over a year and an especially high number of loans for first time buyers," said Paul Smee, head of mortgages at UK Finance.

"Buy to let activity remains subdued compared to its 2015 peak but consistent month to month since stamp duty changes in April 2016. But there are also signs of a softening market and we are not anticipating that this performance will be sustained in the second half of 2017," he pointed out.

"A slightly lop-sided market could well show some growth in house purchase lending but alongside reduced remortgage and buy to let activity," he added.

The figures also show that affordability metrics for first time buyers saw the typical loan size increase from £137,000 in May to £139,000 in June. The average household income increased to £41,000 from £40,500. This meant the income multiple went up from 3.58 to 3.59.

The average amount borrowed by home movers in the UK increased to £180,000 from £177,000 the previous month, while the average home mover household income increased month-on-month from £54,900 to £55,200. The income multiple for the average home mover went up to 3.39 from 3.37.

Buy to let activity was driven by remortgage lending which accounted for over two thirds of total lending.

Buy to let house purchase and remortgage activity in June remained consistent with monthly levels seen since the change on stamp duty on second properties introduced in April last year.

Growing equity release market helping more to buy homes

New figures show how the growing equity release market is helping first time buyers in the UK get on the housing ladder.

Equity release has helped the equivalent of 13 first time buyers a week in the first half of 2017, highlighting how important it has become for the current housing market. The report from Retirement Advantage shows how relatives are using the equity in their home to help family members who are otherwise struggling to save for a deposit for their first home.

Ladder

The data reveals that in the first six months of the year some 2% of customers said they were purchasing an equity release product so that they could help a first time buyer. Over the same period, figures from the Equity Release Council show that there were 16,805 new equity release customers nationwide.

By applying its experiences across the whole of the UK, Retirement Advantage estimates this equates to 13 people each week being helped on to the first rung of the property ladder thanks to equity release.

"Much has been made of the financial support first time buyers get from relatives. What we are seeing is that existing property wealth is a significant source of finance for that support," said Alice Watson, head of marketing at Retirement Advantage Equity Release.

"As the equity release market continues to boom and products grow in popularity, helping first time buyers comes up

consistently as a common reason for choosing to release equity," she explained.

"People want to use the value stored away in their properties to treat themselves in retirement, in the shape of

home improvements or holidays, but they want to help loved ones too.

"For the majority of over 55s, property is their single biggest source of wealth," she pointed out.

"Combined with the growing trend of families helping first time buyers onto the property ladder, it is likely we'll see many more people become property owners thanks to equity release over the coming months and years," she added.



One in five landlords plans to sell from portfolio

One in five landlords in the UK plans to sell at least one property from their portfolios in the next 12 months despite seeing more demand for lettings, new research shows.

While 22% want to sell, some 18% are planning to buy more properties to add to their portfolios, according to a survey of almost 3,000 landlords published by the Residential Landlord Association (RLA).

In the last six months the proportion of landlords who have added to their portfolio is down by 7%, and the proportion who have reduced the size of their portfolio is up by 2%.

The quarterly research survey also found that 33% of landlords have seen an increase in demand for homes to rent over the past three years and faced by an imbalance in the supply and demand for rental properties, 47% indicated that they expected to increase rents over the next year.

The main reason for raising rents seems to be the phasing out of mortgage interest relief which began in April with 35% saying being taxed on their turnover rather than their profit is why they are set to increase rents.

While a number still want to increase their portfolios, the 18% is down from six months ago and the proportion who plan to reduce the size of their portfolio has increased. This finding could signify that landlords are preparing to reduce the size of their portfolios in reaction to policy change, the report suggests.

"As demand continues to increase for homes to rent, punitive tax changes are discouraging



investment by the majority of good landlords who want to provide accommodation. Whilst efforts by the Government to support institutional investment in the sector are welcome, this will remain a drop in the ocean," said RLA chairman Alan Ward.

"To meet demand, we need pro-growth taxation that actively supports and encourages the majority of landlords who are individuals providing good

housing, to invest in the new homes to rent we so desperately need," he added.

The survey also found that almost one in three landlords reported that they attempted to evict a tenant in the past 12 months with the majority, 60%, saying this was due to rent arrears, with tenants owing on average £1,000. The report says this is a serious concern, and future changes to the sector could exacerbate this issue, especially the changes to mortgage interest relief.

Regarding the impact of welfare reform, the findings present a stark account of issues associated with the introduction of universal credit. Of those who let to tenants on universal credit or housing benefit 38% reported that they have experienced universal credit tenants going into rent arrears in the past 12 months.

The survey shows that 53% of landlords successfully request an Alternative Payment Arrangement, but 45% reported that the DWP were unhelpful when contacted. The issue of rent arrears for universal credit tenants, is also one of the leading reasons for a landlord attempting to regain possession of the property with 64% of landlords saying so.

The report says that these findings suggest that reform to universal credit is needed. "The Government needs to ensure that it is easier for landlords to claim alternative payment arrangements and ensure rent arrears are kept to a minimum.

"Without these reforms, landlords may continue to be unwilling to provide homes to those on universal credit," it points out.

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Dacia rates as one of top cars for reliability for 2017



A five star brand reliability rating for cars aged zero to three years and three to eight years old

Dacia has been rated as one of the most reliable car brands out of 36 manufacturers in the 2017 Which? Car Guide – outperforming many well-established and premium brands.

Dacia was awarded a five star brand reliability rating for its cars aged between zero to three years as well as its cars aged three to eight years old.

The annual Which? Car Guide in 2017, measuring reliability and customer satisfaction, is based on feedback from more than 44,000 UK car owners based on their experience in the last 12 months. As well as breakdowns and faults, it considers repair costs, the time a car is off the road for repair and the most common fault types for each model.

Commenting on the results, Louise O'Sullivan, head

of Dacia UK, said: "We're delighted that Dacia has been rated as one of the most reliable car brands in the Which? Car Guide 2017. The results are yet another nod to the reliability of our models. The simple Dacia range offers great value for money motoring and the most affordable cars in their respective segments."

The owner rating is the latest in a number of accolades that Dacia has received in the UK since launching just over four years ago including What Car?'s 'Best Small Car under £12,000' for five consecutive years for the Sandero.

Over four million Dacias have been sold since Groupe Renault reintroduced the brand in Europe in 2004. Dacia was launched in the UK in 2013 and has sold over 100,000 cars to date.

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BMW 5 still a premium benchmark

By Darren Cassey

When the BMW 5 Series gets refreshed it's a pretty big deal. It has long been considered the benchmark for premium saloons and estates, but with new rivals such as Volvo trying to worm their way into a sector dominated by BMW, Audi and Mercedes-Benz, it's no surprise that the 5 Series has been overhauled to stay ahead of the competition.

Aside from a slightly more slender appearance, the 5 Series looks very similar to its predecessor. However, under the skin there have been plenty of changes. For example, the chassis has been reworked using more lightweight materials, which contribute to an overall weight reduction of 100kg.

Meanwhile the notoriously smooth ride has been further optimised with a new suspension setup at the front and the rear.

Our 530d test car came with a 3.0-litre, six-cylinder diesel engine. It's an ideal powerplant for those who drive long distances, with excellent response and a surging, torquey power delivery. Resist the urge to put your foot down and you can easily achieve nearly 60mpg.

The 2.0-litre diesel is even more efficient, promising economy in excess of 60mpg and costing less to begin with. It doesn't have the same badge appeal as the 530d, but it has more than enough performance so you never feel like you're missing out.

A calm, relaxing drive has always been the 5 Series' key selling point, and BMW has exceeded its own high standard with the latest model. At motorway speeds it manages to smooth out the road so that even long drives are dispatched with zero stress.



It's a big car and struggles to hide it

What's arguably even more impressive is that this is not at the expense of great handling. The steering weight is perfectly judged and the 5 Series refrains from rolling around making it surprisingly fun to throw down a back road.

BMW's premium estate is a big car, and it struggles to hide it. The design is more slender than before, with the bodywork appearing to hug the frame more tightly. Particularly in the sportier trims, the addition of small aerodynamic wings help to give a more aggressive appearance, though the standard car does look a tad plain.

The interior is fantastic and exactly what you'd expect from a premium estate, sitting further towards the luxury 7 Series than the more family focused 3 Series. A large central screen plays host to all the menus and satellite navigation functions, with many controls able to be used by waving your hands around.

The only complaint that can be levelled at the car is that the seats are quite



The addition of small aerodynamic wings help to give a more aggressive appearance

uncomfortable, resulting in minor back ache over long distances. Be sure to try out different seats and driving positions before settling on one.

The 5 Series' specification is impressive across the board, with even models lower down the pecking order not giving the feeling you're being short changed – a few blanked off buttons the only hint that something is up.

The standard SE model still gets the widescreen on the dashboard, two-zone climate control and ambient lighting, which makes night driving really pleasant. Optional extras that are worth going for include adaptive cruise control, Driving Assistant Plus (which includes a range of advanced driving aids) and wireless mobile phone charging. It's difficult to find much to fault with the

BMW 5 Series. It was already at the top of the game and with a few choice revisions, such as a lighter chassis and upgraded suspension, there's no doubt it'll continue at the top of the sales charts.

Every mile behind the wheel reminds you why this is the premium saloon benchmark – sorry to BMW's rivals, but expect business as usual in the sales charts.



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Finance examples are for BMW Select agreements for the models shown above. Applies for new vehicles ordered between 1 July and 30 September 2017 and registered by 31 December 2017 (subject to availability). Retail customers only. *On the road cash price is based on manufacturer's recommended retail price and includes 3 year BMW Retailer Warranty, BMW Emergency Service, 12 months' road fund licence, vehicle first registration fee, delivery, number plates and VAT. **Optional first payment and option to purchase fee not payable if you opt to return the vehicle at the end of the agreement (vehicle condition, excess mileage and other charges may be payable). Finance available subject to credit acceptance to UK residents aged 18 or over. Guarantees and indemnities may be required. Terms and conditions apply. Offer may be varied, withdrawn or extended at any time. 'BMW Select' is a form of hire purchase agreement provided by BMW Financial Services (GB) Limited, Summit ONE, Summit Avenue, Farnborough, Hampshire GU14 0FB. You will have a 14 day statutory right to withdraw from the agreement. We commonly introduce customers to a selected panel of lenders including BMW Financial Services. We may receive commission or other benefits for introducing you to such lenders. This introduction does not amount to independent financial advice.



The Driver Support Pack includes a range of advanced safety aids

Repeat victory for the Volvo V40 in safe used car awards

By James Parker

The Volvo V40 with optional Driver Support Package has been named 'Safe Used Car' by Co-op Insurance for the second year in a row, as the award is relaunched for 2017.

Co-op Insurance created the inaugural Co-op Safe Used Car Award last year in partnership with vehicle safety experts Thatcham Research to demonstrate its commitment to campaigning for safer communities throughout the UK. The Volvo V40 with Driver Support Pack was the first car to be presented with the accolade, based on analysis of used family cars, all of which must have a five-star Euro NCAP safety score, CO2 emissions of 120g/km or lower and be freely available on the used car market for £15,000 or less.

Every V40 comes with Autonomous Emergency Braking (AEB) as standard, while the Driver Support Pack includes a range of advanced safety aids, including pedestrian and cyclist detection, adaptive cruise control and systems that warn you if you inadvertently start to leave your lane or if there's a vehicle in your blind spot.



Autonomous Emergency Braking is standard

While the Volvo V40 with the Driver Support Pack remains a non-mover as the overall winner, the V40 without this suite of safety features is also in the top 10 list of safest used cars.

Thanks to an impressive number of standard safety features, including the world-first application of a pedestrian airbag, every V40 offers crucial protection for its occupants – as well as those outside – in an accident. However, where the car really comes into its own is with its collision-avoidance technology.

The V40 became the safest car ever tested by Euro NCAP when it was tested in 2012, with superb scores across the board – including an unprecedented 100% for safety assist.

Since then, the Volvo S90 and V90 have surpassed the best overall score of any model tested in 2016, making Euro NCAP's top-three best-ever-performing cars all Volvos.

James Hillon, director of product at Co-op Insurance, said: "We're pleased to announce that the Volvo V40 has topped the list as Co-op's Safest Used Family Car for a second year running, making it a safe choice for families looking to buy a second-hand vehicle.

"Volvo scored the highest in a series of track tests conducted by Thatcham Research and once again produced unprecedented results."

Bruce Greenwood, used car programme manager for Volvo Car UK, said: "To be presented with the Co-op Safe Used Car Award for the second year running – and to also have two cars in the top 10 – by one of the UK's largest insurance providers as well as experts in vehicle safety is a real testament to the Volvo V40.

"Even as standard, the V40 has class-leading safety features that focus on protecting the driver, passengers and pedestrians.

"Customers are recognising the benefits that come with buying a V40 through the Volvo Selekt Approved Used Car programme, because the scheme includes competitive prices, comprehensive warranty cover, roadside assistance and a full history check. Combined with the V40's outstanding safety and striking design, this has made the car an immensely popular second-hand buy since its introduction in 2012."

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3dr hatch diesel, 1.5cc, 03 reg, short MoT, 183k miles, 4 former keepers.
£425 ono.
07521 411373.

RENAULT LAGUNA 1.9DCi
Diesel, 2004, red, 5-dr, MoT end Oct, radio, CD player, reliable, good runner, first to see will buy.
Bargain £325 ono.
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£395
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BARGAIN

VW POLO
1.4
02 reg.
95,000 miles.
12 months MoT.
Good condition.
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LAND ROVER FREELANDER
2005, 103k, green, abs, e/w, a/b, a/m, a/c, alloys, stereo/CD, part leather interior, towbar unused, heated screens, very good condition.
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2002, excellent condition, 7 months MoT, 70,000 miles, service history, petrol and LPG (professionally fitted), cheap runner on LPG 57p per litre.
£1,595 ono.
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PRESTIGE

MERCEDES E350 CDI SE AUTO COUPE
2009, panoramic glass sunroof, comand sat nav, memory package, 17ins alloys, 6 disc CD/ DVD changer, 130k with FSH,
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LAND ROVER FREELANDER
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£2,600 ono.
07731 700845.

MUST BE SEEN

MERCEDES E240 ELANACE
2002, excellent condition, 7 months MoT, 70,000 miles, service history, petrol and LPG (professionally fitted), cheap runner on LPG 57p per litre.
£1,595 ono.
07967 639378.

PRESTIGE

MERCEDES E350 CDI SE AUTO COUPE
2009, panoramic glass sunroof, comand sat nav, memory package, 17ins alloys, 6 disc CD/ DVD changer, 130k with FSH,
May PX for cheaper car.
£8,950 ono
07836 204450 / deolsuk@hotmail.co.uk

MAY PX FOR CHEAPER CAR.
£8,950 ono
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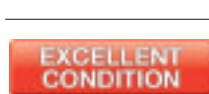
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5 door. 2011 (11).
Two owners from new.
FSH (74,000 miles).
Full MoT. Alloys.
A/C. Immaculate throughout.
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Navigation System, half leather
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TOYOTA AYGO
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2008.
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FSH.
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Good condition.
£2,195.
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VAUXHALL ASTRA
2009, 42,900 miles, convert-
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mirrors, alarm, long MoT, full
Vauxhall s/h.
£2,800 ono.
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BARGAIN

VAUXHALL VECTRA
2006, silver,
low mileage, 56,562.
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Serviced every year.
Very clean. Reason to sell,
£1,600.
07980 435999.



VW POLO
2006, 1.2, 87000 Miles, FSH,
MOT Until 03/18, One Previous
Owner, Great Condition.
£1,750 ono
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WANTED, CLASSIC Car. Private
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01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

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personal

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CARING, young at heart lady seeks
tall caring gent with GSOH for
friendship, outings and car drives.
Text only replies. Mailbox:
6042252

SASKA, kind hearted Asian lady,
single and still living with family so
seeking very discreet relationship
with strong minded man. I am 29yrs
but like mature experienced men.
Text Only. Box: 4047094

SALLY young 50, happy go lucky
blonde, looking to let her hair down
with a happy, down to earth guy with
dark hair. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955**
Box No: 428269

MIA, attractive married lady from
Birmingham are, looking to meet a
discreet gent, any age, any area for
fun times. I am 49yrs old but look
younger. **Text Only. Box: 4079581**

PAM, 40, cuddly feminine young
looking female, OHAC, financially
secure, looking for fun times without
complications with likeminded male.
Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No:
427753

TINA, 47yrs, GSOH and good figure
with average looks. I want a similar
man. GSOH looks important. Age
is but a number. I have no car but
can accommodate. **Text Only. Box:**
4145368

SUE, 47, attractive lonely brunette
who loves evenings in/out, music.
WLTm someone sincere to love and
get close to, why not give me a call?
Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No:
427549

JANE, new to area, hoping to meet
an older gent. I am 38yrs, brunette
with boyish leggy figure. N/S with
GSOH. I've a good job and small
flat which I own. **Text Only. Box:**
4099268

TERESA, friendly lady with GSOH,
curvy build and attractive looks, 50
something, seeking romantic male
45-55. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box**
No: 428383

TRACY, 68yrs, recently retired and
has time on her hands. Would love
to meet a much much much younger
chap for carefree times. **Text Only.**
Box: 4006039

ARE you a gent with GSOH 60-70
and looking for some fun then call
me, Leah, I'm 57yrs, slim, attractive
and looking for fun. ACA. Or text me.
Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No:
428381

HELLO, my name is Pia, I am a very
petite, kind and respectful Asian girl,
hoping to meet an older white man.
I'm 23yrs old and have just moved
her. **Text Only. Box: 4177099**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but
bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any
area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906**
515 3019 Box: 413399

JANE, 52yrs genuine blue eyed
blonde lady WLTm romantic gent for
potential relationship. ACA/Text
answered so please reply. **Tel No:**
0906 500 3955 Box No: 428379

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated
brunette seeks no strings mutual
pleasure with gent 40+. Must be
discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel:**
0906 515 3003 Box 419673

LINDA, 48yrs, young looking blonde
lady, slim and attractive. Hoping to
meet new men friends, call and let's
see what happens. **Tel No: 0906**
500 3955 Box No: 428377

JANE, young 41, very broadminded
seeks chap any age for discreet no
strings fun, any age, no time wasters
ACA. **Tel No: 0906 515 3011 Box:**
409715

MIA, attractive married lady from
Birmingham are, looking to meet a
discreet gent, any age, any area for
fun times. I am 49yrs old but look
younger. **Text Only. Box: 4079581**

I am a 57-year-old lady, 5ft 8ins tall,
short brownish hair. I am of medium
build, outgoing, caring. I WLTm
similar male. **Text only replies.**
Mailbox: 6024848

TAMARA, 44yrs, beautiful Indian
lady seeks a Muslim gent 40+. **Tel**
No: 0906 500 3955 Box No:
428147

MARGARET, attractive blonde
widow, living alone and hoping to
find a nice gentleman soulmate. I
have lots to offer so please call or
text me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box**
No: 428375

JOY, mid 50s independent lady,
brunette, loves dining out, seeking
gent of any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906**
500 3955 Box No: 428373

EMILY, mature well educated lady,
blonde and smart and broadminded
seeks gent any age for no strings
fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box**
421375

ATTRACTIVE widow, loves life, 60s
music, walking and fun. Hoping to
meet a similar minded gent 60-80
for life's adventures. **Tel No: 0906**
500 3955 Box No: 428371

TAMIKA, mature black beauty,
hourglass figure and open minded.
Pls call if you are discreet, broad
minded and nice. I can travel and
accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515**
3007 Box 422365

NICOLA, 37yrs mixed race beauty,
just moved to the area from London
so a bit lonely. Looks unimportant
must have GSOH and be kind.
ACA/Text answered. **Tel No: 0906**
500 3955 Box No: 428369

SAMANTHA, 35yrs, attractive
brunette with own business, seeks
adventurous gent for casual
relationships. **Tel: 0906 515 3035 Box**
425979

WANTED, submissive gent by
attractive 51yrs, please call if
you want to know more. **Ats Tel No:**
0906 500 3955 Box No: 428367

HARRIETT 42yrs, blue eyed
brunette with long lets and decent
curves! Looking for a cheeky
adventurous man for fun only. I live
alone so can accommodate and can
travel. Discretion assured. ACA.
Give me a try. **Tel: 0906 515 3031**
Box 426205

ATTRACTIVE lady, young at heart,
would like to meet genuine caring
guy for coffee and chats, plus days
discreet. **Text only Replies. Mailbox:**
6035338

CARMEL, open minded naughty
lady seeks a broad minded strict man
to unleash her wilder side. Age/looks
unimportant but no time wasters
please. **Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box**
426851

SALLY young 50, happy go lucky
blonde, looking to let her hair down
with a happy, down to earth guy with
dark hair. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955**
Box No: 428269

ATTRACTIVE lady 61yrs young.
Looking for friendship, maybe more
with genuine gent. I'm feminine and
curvy. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box**
No: 428157

SASKA, kind hearted Asian lady,
single and still living with family so
seeking very discreet relationship
with strong minded man. I am 29yrs
but like mature experienced men.
Text Only. Box: 4047094

CHRISTINE, 60 something lady,
blue eyed blonde. Sincere, solvent
and kind. Call me if you are interest-
ed in meeting up. Looks unimpor-
tant. Must be N/S. **Tel No: 0906 500**
3955 Box No: 428155

MIKE, male, 61, seeks black or
Asian lady, any age for adult fun,
maybe more. **Text only replies.**
Mailbox: 6010228

MALE, late 60s, N/S, retired, 5ft9,
slim build, enjoys holidays abroad,
weekends away, travel, meals out.
Looking to meet female, N/S, who
enjoys similar interests, to share
good times together, for friendship
and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500**
3955 Box No: 428219

JEFF, 60s, tall, fit, young outlook,
N/S, car owner, seeks similar lady
for friendship, outings etc. **Tel No:**
0906 500 3955 Box No:
428175

MALE, a young 60 would love to
meet a cuddly lady. **Text only**
replies. Mailbox: 6016333

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then send to 80098 Successfully received mes-
sages cost £1.50 per SMS received (max 160
characters). You must exchange 7 messages each
before you can swap contact details. Messages
may be moderated for your safety and security.

TINA, 47yrs, GSOH and good figure
with average looks. I want a similar
man, GSOH looks unimportant. Age
is but a number. I have no car but
can accommodate. **Text Only. Box:**
4145368

ATTRACTIVE widow, attractive,
blonde GSOH, solvent with good
figure. All that's missing is a nice
man 60+. Call me if you are inter-
ested. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box**
No: 428139

JANE, new to area, hoping to meet
an older gent. I am 38yrs, brunette
with boyish leggy figure. N/S with
GSOH. I've a good job and small
flat which I own. **Text Only. Box:**
4099268

MAY, 64, widow, GSOH, lonely and
WLTm a nice, kind gentleman of
similar age, hopefully someone who
likes walking and animals. **Tel No:**
0906 500 3955 Box No: 428217

TRACY, 68yrs, recently retired and
has time on her hands. Would love
to meet a much much much younger
chap for carefree times. **Text Only.**
Box: 4006039

SLIM attractive lady, 59yrs, femi-
nine, kind, loves life. Call me or text
me your number and let's meet up.
Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No:
428143

LADY, 63, WLTm a gentleman of
similar age, for friendship and out-
ings. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box**
No: 428029

HELLO, my name is Pia, I am a very
petite, kind and respectful Asian girl,
hoping to meet an older white man.
I'm 23yrs old and have just moved
her. **Text Only. Box: 4177099**

SHEILA, 64, widow, GSOH, likes to
get out and about, walking, animals,
reading, classical music, WLTm a
male of similar age. **Tel No: 0906**
500 3955 Box No: 428181

Single Men

VERY fit, elderly widower, loves
walking, bird watching, exploring
Europe, WLTm a lady for compan-
ionship. Please reply via box num-
ber. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box**
No: 428171

COLIN 72, from Burntwood, looking
for loving lady for days out, holidays
and company. **Text only replies.**
Mailbox: 4880436

MALE, 20s, seeks NSA fun with
female. I've a laugh, age isn't
important. **Text only replies.**
Mailbox: 6042204

MALE, 46, genuine and honest and
very caring looking for a LTR with
lady. **Text only Replies. Mailbox:**
5422168

MALE 20s, chilled out and happy in
life looking for woman to share life
with. **Text only Replies. Mailbox:**
6034839

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man,
seeking nice, slim, honest lady for
LTR, going out for drinks and having
good times together. **Tel No: 0906**
500 3955 Box No: 427923

MIKE, male, 61, seeks black or
Asian lady, any age for adult fun,
maybe more. **Text only replies.**
Mailbox: 6010228

MALE, late 60s, N/S, retired, 5ft9,
slim build, enjoys holidays abroad,
weekends away, travel, meals out.
Looking to meet female, N/S, who
enjoys similar interests, to share
good times together, for friendship
and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500**
3955 Box No: 428219

JEFF, 60s, tall, fit, young outlook,
N/S, car owner, seeks similar lady
for friendship, outings etc. **Tel No:**
0906 500 3955 Box No:
428175

MALE, a young 60 would love to
meet a cuddly lady. **Text only**
replies. Mailbox: 6016333

SINGLE male, 43, looking for
female friends for txt, phone chats,
maybe more. **Text only replies.**
Mailbox: 6017886

MALE, 47, fit, slim, honest man,
seeking nice, slim, honest lady for
LTR, going out for drinks and having
good times together. **Tel No: 0906**
500 3955 Box No: 427923

MALE 40s, 5ft 8ins, brown hair,
seeks lovely honest girl for fun and
friendship please. **Text only**
replies. Mailbox: 6018513

MARK 40s, from the Birmingham
area WLTm a female, any national-
ity, for LTR. **Text only replies.**
Mailbox: 6016342

MALE, 50, brown hair, brown eyes,
average looks, 18 and a half stone,
good sense of humour, animal lover
with loads of love and security to
give to the right person. **Tel No:**
0906 500 3955 Box No: 418783

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The first eleven, with a combination of older heads and experience, alongside youth and ambition



A bright future is on the horizon for Wolverhampton United with a new management team to lead them



Joint managers, Danny Carter, left, and Andrew Carrier



The managers seen during a training session at Prestwood Road

United for a new era with rising ambition

THE young management team have demanded their players' ambitions match their own as a new era begins at Wolverhampton United.

Danny Carter and Andrew Carrier are thinking big in their first post as joint bosses at the West Midlands League Division Two outfit.

It's been a long time since they've had much to shout about at their Prestwood Road home, which is in the Wednesfield area of the city.

It's 41 years since the current guise of United came to being, after Oxley and Whitmore Old Boys merged and joined the West Midlands League.

They have played in all three divisions of that pyramid, with four separate stints in the Premier Division until they were relegated for the last time back in 2003.

They went down to Division Two three years ago and finished eighth out of 14 teams last season, so improvement is much needed.

Experience

Carter and Carrier have been friends for years and are used to Premier Division football, so will want to climb back to that level.

Carter was a popular player at Wednesfield while Carrier has previous coaching experience, serving at Willenhall Town and Wolverhampton Sporting Community.

Both are just starting out in management, aged 24 and 28 respectively, and are determined to succeed for both themselves and the club.

Carrier said: "I've mainly played in the Prem, but I've had a few injuries and I've been watching football since then and constantly trying to get involved."

"Me and Danny have been friends through football for a long time now, he's well known and respected in the game. He's been captain, as a player, at every club he's been at."

"He's been trying to get into jobs here and there

SPORTING FEATURE

By Craig Birch

The players are experienced enough to go out there and think to themselves 'no-one at this level is better than us. We can do it'.

and, when this came up, he phoned me and asked if I'd be interested. I thought it would be great to work with him.

"We came in quite late, it was three weeks into pre-season so it was quite late really, but we quickly made a few phone calls to see what players we could get down. Danny has done really well to get those lads in, I've given him a helping hand with a few numbers and training has gone really well."

"I don't like to put this in a disrespectful way, but a few of them are probably coming towards the end of their careers although they still have plenty to offer to the game. They are all around Premier Division or Division One standard, some of them are the best in the league if you ask me."

"We've hit the ground running and me and Danny are not off the phone to each other every day and we talk, at length, about the squad after we've trained on a Thursday."

"We talked a bit more in depth after we've named the players, then we turn up on a Saturday and go over tactics, before we deliver it to the lads."

"We've set up a fine list, if you're late or don't have a shower or have dirty boots it will cost you."

"It's all for the players, though, it pays for their

group nights out down the line. It gets a bit of a banter going between the lads and they are all trying to get money out of each other. It's all about emptying their pockets!"

They have left to concentrate on their jobs, with owner John Lee and chairperson Hazel Keirle taking care of matters behind-the-scenes.

Recruitment has gathered pace despite the duo arriving relatively late in the summer, succeeding Liam Fieldhouse after Ben Astley quit at the end of last season.

Centre-half Tony Russon has been brought in and named captain while striker Darren Leonard, even at the age of 43, has vast experience at a higher level.

Midfielder Lee Onions has played in the Premier Division for Wednesfield while Daniel Benbow, Jamal Pinnock and Leon Pugh have all turned out at levels above.

Promotion

Back-to-back home games have seen them begin the season unbeaten, with a 4-0 win over FC Darlaston and a 1-1 draw against AFC Billbrook.

They are second on goal difference behind Warstones Wanderers, who have netted 15 goals in two games with 8-1 and 7-3 victories over Ludlow and AFC Bridgnorth Development.

Carter and Carrier expect Wanderers to be involved in the promotion race, but have made their intentions clear – they want to be champions.

Carrier added: "This could be a stepping stone, the aim is promotion and we really want to push on here. Hopefully, we can win the league."

"It's no secret what are ambitions are, I think we will be a force to be reckoned with. From what I'm told, Division Two is quite competitive but, hopefully, our experience can take over."

"Outsiders have asked us what we expect to do and the players are experienced enough to go out there and think to themselves 'no one at this level is better than us. We can do it'."

Wolves are bookies' favourites for league

WOLVES have now been placed as favourites for the Championship title by leading bookmakers after their perfect start to the season. The club have gone from 14-1 since May to 11-4 after their good start to the 2017/18 campaign.

They have already seen off Middlesbrough, Derby and Hull as well as a victory over Yeovil in the league cup. Even before their clash on Saturday, with Cardiff, with Wolves then in second place, but level on points, the Molineux men were touted as the most likely to win the league.

David Stevens, head Of PR at Coral, said: "The odds have tumbled on Wolves for the Championship. They were 14-1 when we first opened betting in late May, and down to 10-1 before the start of the season."

"Their odds since have gone down to 15-2 after their opening win, then 11-2 and they are now 11-4 favourites after last night's victory. To put it into context, Aston Villa were 7-1 title favourites before the season began, but are now out to 14-1."

Homegrown talent is priority for Pulis

TONY PULIS dreams of putting out an Albion team in the Premier League brimming with local talent from Birmingham and the Black Country.

The Baggies boss is impressed with the standard of players being nurtured in the academy and hopes that, in two years' time, those promising youngsters will be first-team regulars. Teenagers Sam Field and Rekeem Harper both played in midfield on the opening day of the season, while Jonathan Leko and Kane Wilson were named on the bench. If Pulis can follow up Gareth Barry's arrival with a few more additions before the window shuts, it may free up some of those youngsters to go out on loan.

The Baggies boss says regular men's football – the kind he can't afford to give them in the Premier League – is crucial for their development.

"The big thing about the football club is they've kept their young players in academy football for far, far too long," he said. "We've got to try and find four or five players to bring into this club to take it up to a level where we can cope without having the kids around us."

Marathon for 20th time will be 'special'

THE 20th running of one of the region's biggest marathons promises to be a 'special' occasion, according to the event's top sponsor. The Carver Wolverhampton City Marathon has been a landmark event since the late 1990s. It is just a matter of days before people take to Wolverhampton's streets for the 20th time in succession on Sunday September 3.

Henry Carver was behind Carvers becoming the major sponsors and underwriters of the event which has run since 1998. Mr Carver, who won the business person of the year award in the Express & Star Business Awards this year, said: "It is special to be marking 20 years."

"We've had a huge amount of support from the people of Wolverhampton and I believe we're fundamentally a charitable city. The numbers this year are looking encouraging and it's going to be more of the same. We always get 2,000-plus and we always give £15,000 to £20,000 to charity."

There will be six events – including the marathon, half-marathon, 10km run, cycle route, walk through West Park and wheel and wheelchair events.



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Exceptional weekend for cricket club

THERE was plenty to celebrate at the Memorial Ground as both Stourbridge first and second teams beat their Worcester Nomads counterparts in the Birmingham League.

Meanwhile, in division five of the Worcestershire League the third team were assured of promotion by beating Old Hill and the fourth team won as well.

A hat-trick by Luke Alexander saw the collapse of Worcester Nomads bowled out for 121 off 42 overs. Opener Tom Keen top scored with 60 off 115 balls. Alexander's 4-20 was backed by Zain Ul Hassan taking 4 for 25 in six overs.

In Stour's reply a brilliant cameo of 33 off 28 balls, including seven fours, by opener Alex Bingham set the platform for skipper Josh Banks (16) and Jade Rickter (21 not out) to guide their side home to victory. Stour had collapsed to 81-5 in the 21st over.

The 20 points have come timely for Stour to stay top five in Division Three.

In the third team a knock of 81 by Ali Shah and four wicket haul by Dave Colesby defeated Old Hill to guarantee skipper Alex Colman's team promotion. Stour secured second place with just one match to go at Barnt Green.

The fourth team notched up a win against Old Hill. Juniors Tom Stephens (71), Ben Concannon (41) and Jack Dudley (41) helped Stour reach the match-winning double hundred.

"It's been an exceptional weekend," said club chairman Harilal Jivan-Patel.

Yeltz paid price for a slow start against newboys

Halesowen Town 1 Farsley Celtic 2
HALESOWEN paid the price for a slow start, falling two goals behind before the interval as they slipped to a narrow home defeat in the Evo-Stik Premier.

Nathan Cartman latched on to Ben Atkinson's ball down the left and curled it superbly into the corner of the net from 15 yards after 29 minutes and Walshaw's low drive soon doubled the lead for the newly-promoted visitors from Yorkshire in the 31st minute.

Halesowen's only first-half chance came just before the break when Ben Clarke's 30-yard shot was tipped over the bar by keeper Graeme McKibben.

Substitute Roland Agbor led a much better second half for the Yeltz and he fired a low shot at McKibben in the 54th minute. McKibben then made a fine save to deny Joe Howell in front of goal after Agbor turned provider. Another Agbor shot was saved by McKibben after 67 minutes.

Agbor eventually pulled a goal back in the 87th minute after a neat one-two with James Spraybut it proved to be too little, too late.

Olympic Games target for young archer



Freya Palmer has won financial help

A BUILDER has given a top Stourbridge archer a cash boost as part of its initiative to help the youngster achieve her Olympic dream.

Wolverhampton-based Persimmon Homes West Midlands launched its Healthy Communities scheme recently with £750 up for grabs each month for the rest of 2017.

The money is to be spent on sports kit, equipment, coaching or facilities.

Fourteen-year-old Freya Palmer was chosen to receive the donation to help upgrade her archery

equipment. The youngster from Wollaston became the National Champion for her age group last month having won the title at the Junior National Championships at Lilleshall in Shropshire.

Freya is part of the Archery GB Performance Academy and aims to shoot for GB internationally and at the 2024 Olympics.

She is the Worcestershire and West Midlands Indoor and Outdoor Champion and holds more than 20 county records and a national record. She is coached every week by Archery GB at Lilleshall.

HEATHENS FACE VITAL CLASH

CRADLEY launched a dramatic comeback but had to settle for a 43-43 draw against local rivals Birmingham at Monmore Green on Monday.

The play-off chasing National League sides played out a thriller but there was nothing to separate the sides.

Heathens now face a must-win Bank Holiday clash with top of the table Belle Vue at Monmore Green on Bank Holiday Monday.

The Heathens' top four hopes looked to be in tatters as they threw away a number of points and were on the receiving end of some controversial refereeing decisions early on Monday night.

Costly mistakes left Will Pottinger's side on the back foot before they rallied to pull level with three races remaining. But they were unable to complete what would have been a remarkable comeback with skipper Tom Perry and Danny Ayres not able to overhaul maximum man Liam Carr in a tense heat 15 decider.

Whilst they could be forgiven for being pleased with a draw given the circumstances, skipper Perry conceded they were frustrated. "We're not really pleased because we wanted the win," he said. "I think we did well to pull it back but we might have had that extra push in the last couple.

Chance

"At least we managed to avoid getting beat and we still have a chance after that. We just can't afford to drop any more points to have a chance to be in those play-offs."

They were 10 points down after nine heats and in need of a miracle but fought back to force a last-heat decider.

Perry kick-started the comeback by blasting from third to first with a brave ride in heat 10. Reserve Conor Dwyer sensationally partnered Danny Ayres to a 5-1 in the next race before Dwyer and Harris repeated the trick in heat 12.

They headed into the final race level and despite shutting out Tom Bacon, Perry and Ayres were unable to hunt down the impeccable Carr.

Rutter goes retro at Classic TT



Michael Rutter will be hoping for double success on his 350cc G50 Matchless at the TT races

VISITORS to the Isle of Man often say the trip is a step back in time and e Hill-born racer Michael Rutter will be racing the same Ducati his father rode to victory at the TT in the 1970s in the Classic Superbike race on Monday.

The 45-year-old has also entered the Senior Classic TT and Lightweight Classic TT on Saturday, and the Junior Classic TT on Monday.

"I've been given some special leathers to

wear when I ride dad's old bike by Alpinestar, which are exactly the same as the ones he wore," said Rutter.

"I'm riding a 750cc Ducati in the in the Superbike race on the Monday morning, then it's the Ripley Land G50 Matchless during the afternoon. I'll be racing the same Ducati my dad raced with the Red Fox team, and finally the Ripley Land Racing Honda 350cc."

Glassboys keeping up pace at top

Stourbridge 1 Nantwich Town 1
STOURBRIDGE maintained their unbeaten start to the season but were left hanging on in the second half after a powerful 45 minutes from the visitors.

Jordan Archer with his fifth goal of the season gave the Glassboys a half time lead with a great finish on 17 minutes, and that was really the sum total of chances in a poor first period.

If Nantwich looked slightly on the back front in the first half, they came out all guns blazing and equalised on 50 minutes through Matthew Bell who got on the end of Casper Hughes' clever chipped cross from the left to score from the edge of the box.

The introduction of Sean Cooke and former Halesowen player Kaiman Anderson proved pivotal for the visitors, the former immediately shooting just wide. Cooke looked very dangerous and another substitute, Stephen Jones should have scored from the edge of the box.

Cooke almost won it on 85 minutes when Gould came out to make a clearance and Cooke sent the ball just over the bar from 30 yards. Stourbridge's only chance of the half came when Daryl Westlake chipped over on 59 minutes.

Whitby 1 Stourbridge 3

Stourbridge remained among early-season frontrunners in the Evo-Stik Premier after pulling off a pleasing victory on the North Yorkshire coast.

The Glassboys made a glorious start when central defender Jack Duggan headed Josh Green's free-kick across goal for defensive partner Paul McCone to crash home after just nine minutes.

Whitby managed to equalise on 23 minutes when Luke Bythway blasted home a stunning 25-yard free-kick which gave Glassboys goalkeeper Matt Gould no chance.

Stour were back in front just after the half-hour mark when Danny O'Callaghan sent Archer clear, who got the better of Bythway before firing home past Whitby goalkeeper Shane Bland.

Stourbridge had to wait until the 81st minute before making certain of the points when Archer combined with Ryan Rowe before slotting home his second goal.

Stourbridge should have gone on to win by a wider margin as twice O'Callaghan went close, just wide on 88 minutes and then denied again a minute into stoppage time by Bland.

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